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THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.
A Vision of the Heavenly Home.

LIFE TRIUMPHANT

A STUDY OF THE
**Nature, Origin, and Destiny
of Man**

INCLUDING A CAREFUL INQUIRY CONCERNING
THE CONQUEST OF DEATH
THE CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE BEYOND THE GRAVE
AND THE
SOLEMN AND STUPENDOUS EVENTS OF THE
RESURRECTION AND THE JUDGMENT

WHICH ARE TO CULMINATE IN

The Great Consummation of the Kingdom of God

By JOHN E. READ

ASSISTANT EDITOR OF THE COLUMBIAN CYCLOPEDIA

With an Introduction by
REV. CHARLES H. PARKHURST, D.D., LL.D.

ILLUSTRATED



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Jan. 3, 1900

INTRODUCTION

It is a very pleasant concurrence of circumstances that has again brought me into personal relations with my old pupil and friend, the author of this volume. Conditions are greatly changed with us both since the times, thirty years gone, when we looked into one another's eyes as teacher and taught; but, if I may infer from the character and tone of that which he herewith gives to the public, there remains in him still the same old serious quest after truth that distinguished him in his young student days, and the same engrossment with the things that are real and eternal.

When the sun has passed the meridian the eye of the observer turns with always increasing frequency and thoughtful regard toward the place of the sun's setting, and even while it is still bright and sunny afternoon the stealthily lengthening shadows already appeal to the soul in terms of speechless but persuasive reminder.

One of the earliest recorded attempts to deal with the vast question of the hereafter was made by the man of Uz: "If a man die shall he live again?" Question; and most of our knowledge was question before it became knowledge; and sometimes question is a great while in becoming knowledge. Nearly every generation reduces to certainty something that in some previous generation was nothing but inquiry. Very often the generation in which the question starts long antedates the generation when the question stops, — that is, when the question gets answered. For example: Cain once asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" That question hung in the air a good many centuries; finally, after at least four thousand years, Christ took it down out of the air and said, "Yes, you are your brother's keeper." Four thousand years was a good while to wait, but there is nothing which exists so abundantly as time, — unless

perhaps it is space, — so that no amount of time can be called “long time,” provided only it does what is wanted of it, and yields fixed result that will stay fixed.

Job, too, who felt of the future with the question just quoted, lived so long ago that nobody, I believe, knows exactly *how* long ago he lived, and his question likewise, after hanging in the air some thousands of years, was taken down by the same Christ that took down Cain’s question; and His emergence from the grave was one way He had of answering back to Job through the intervening centuries and saying, “Yes, if a man die he shall live again.”

After our Lord’s answer, Job’s question ceased to be question. This is true at least so far as His disciples were concerned, Thomas being the only one with whom the interrogation point did not readily reduce to a period. The process by which Jesus wiped from Thomas’s mind the lingering traces of incertitude is interesting. It is always interesting to observe the steps by which a man or a boy grows up to the size of his inquiry, — the steps, I mean, by which inquiry becomes converted into conviction.

This matter of converting inquiry into conviction is one that deserves from parents and teachers a little more careful heed than is wont to be given to it. We can say to a boy, “Believe what I tell you because I tell you.” That is well enough; only we must bear in mind that we are thereby attempting to put into his mind something that is a little more than his mind has yet grown large enough to hold. It may grow to it later, but has not yet; and conviction that a boy or a man can carry on the inside of his mind is usually a good deal more profitable than conviction that has to accommodate itself, the best it can, on the mind’s exterior. Thomas could have been told to believe in Jesus’s resurrection on the authority of Jesus’s own word for it, or the word of his fellow disciples, but a question would still have lurked on the inside of what Thomas might have tried to call his conviction; and conviction could have become solid and entire only when he had grown to the dimensions of his

own inquiry, and become large enough to accommodate, as an assurance, what had at first been obliged to lodge outside as an uncertainty and a query.

This matter of outgrowing an uncertainty — finding interior accommodations for what has been obliged to room outside as an inquiry and a doubt — becomes interesting and serious, especially when the question involved is one so earnest as that which composes the subject-matter of this volume. When Jesus had to deal with the questioning Thomas upon this problem, there were two ways in which He could have proceeded with him. He could have narrowed the question to the limitations of Thomas, or He could have widened Thomas to the dimensions of the question. Probably the former method is the one most in vogue with us. When I am approached by a man who is perplexed with the question of resurrection, immortality, or matter kindred, my first impulse always is to try to reduce the difficulties of the question, and to make the question a little smaller to the mind of the inquirer than it seems to him to be. I take the measure of his mind, soul, or whatever we like to call it, then compute the size of the truth that I want to have lodged in him. If, upon comparison, I discover that the truth will not go in the mind without a remainder, I go about to chip off enough of the truth to reduce discrepancies, and try again to see if the two will fit. I am only describing now the policy that it is one's first and natural impulse to adopt when the fact or truth to be received is larger than one's easy capacity for receiving it.

This accounts for the disposition, that is so prevalent a one, to simplify religious truth, and to make it out smaller and easier than it first off looks to be. The method may be at fault, but the ultimate purpose had in view is at once kindly and intelligent, for it is neither a comfortable nor a safe condition for a man to be in to be straining himself to believe more than is easy for him. What we call skepticism is often only another name for the pain that is caused a small mind by trying to contain a truth that is too big for it. When, therefore, Thomas had

difficulty with the matter of a risen Lord, and would not at first, because he could not, believe that the Lord was risen, everything was made easy for him ; but it was not made easy by paring down in any way the fact set before him to believe. In other words, our Lord did not accommodate the fact to Thomas but accommodated Thomas to the fact, — made Thomas large enough so that he could hold the fact without its paining him. It would be interesting to know exactly how it was the Lord did this, and just what the change wrought in Thomas was that while, at one time, he was so strenuous in his disbelief in a risen Christ, he was so soon after so cordial and impassioned in his belief in a risen Christ. But more important for us than the method is the fact that Thomas became able to believe the event by being himself enlarged, rather than by the event being belittled ; he grew to the stature of the fact given to him to accept.

It is at least clear that this enlargement did not come about as a result of Christ's declaring that He had risen or by any reiteration of such statement on the part of his fellow disciples. It takes a good deal beside reiteration to reach the point where conviction is made. A disproportionate emphasis is often laid upon the repetitious statement of such a truth as resurrection, and too little thought given to cultivating the soul to such a degree of religious appreciation as shall make that truth possible and easy. The object of ordinary school training is not accomplished by making pupils willing to hear what their teacher tells them, but by making them competent to discern and feel for themselves the truth of what their teacher tells them.

Let now that same principle be adopted into the child's Christian nurture. The aim of such nurture dare not consider itself attained by any number of religious things told to the child, — no matter how many times they may have been told, — but by the amount of religious fibre wrought into the child, the delicacy of religious sensibility, the depth of religious discernment, — in a word by the amount of religious faculty secured to the child, by means of which the great facts and sublime realities

of the Christian religion come within the scope of his own personal knowledge and personal appreciation; so that he is able to say that he believes in immortality not because somebody else has believed it and has told it to him, — mother, minister, Sunday-school teacher, — but because he has grown up religiously into that wide and open atmosphere where the great realities lie out in sight, ready to be felt, easy to be seen. This is the only thing that can rub out queries and break down religious interrogation points into solid and blessed periods.

One cannot observe the easy and confident way in which the Apostles speak and write about things that may be to most of us invisible, and about such vast matters as the resurrection and the life eternal, without feeling that that ease and confidence do not come because they have so learned the phrases that they can repeat them without a slip, nor because they have narrowed the import of these things to so small a meaning that they can handle them with a mere every-day kind of dexterity. The truth of the case is rather felt to be that they have become so spiritually schooled and built up in Christian stature that the great things of the soul and the vast meanings of revealed truth lie as easily and intimately near to their elevated understandings as ordinary truths do to men of common discipline, or as the primer does to the a-b-c-darian.

I am led by the Scriptures, by the testimony of many later prophets and apostles, and by my own occasional swift moments of richer experience, to feel that all these matters, to a soul that is grown up to them, are as simple and natural and unproblematic as is the multiplication table to a mind sufficiently trained to have a distinct sense of quantity. We know, some of us, how long one can walk over confused misty mountain-ground, where every object we come near to is a problem and the whole landscape is spread out before us in blurred interrogation; and yet all the time we are certain that somewhere a little way up — we are not sure how far up — every object is distinctly outlined and clothed in glistening light that makes it as intensely real to the eye as any object it may long have been familiar with ten

thousand feet below. The great problems of the natural and likewise of the spiritual world are not problems because of their own intricacy, but because we are not at the altitude where they can shine into our eyes with lines of full and level light.

There come to us moments — almost all must have had them at one time or another — when these great matters, that on other occasions seem so difficult and so almost impossible, somehow lay themselves out before us in a way that bring them close to us, easy to the thought, dear to the heart; and so far from their straining our minds into hard knots of perplexity, our chief wonder is how they ever could have perplexed us, and how they ever could have seemed to us other than natural and easy.

That gives us the difference between natural and revealed religion. Natural religion is so much of religion as is evident without any one telling it to us. Revealed religion has to be told to us, but just as fast as we grow toward it, and grow into it, revealed religion becomes itself natural religion, just as in the physical world things that lie away outside of our horizon gradually creep up over the horizon and into sight exactly so fast as we move toward the horizon.

That is why holy living has so much to do with the fresh vigor of a man's religious assurances. We cannot live in a foggy atmosphere and still see the stars. Affections that only busy themselves with coarse and defiled objects of regard cannot answer back with tender or even intelligent responsiveness to the intimations that the celestial verities attempt continually to make of themselves to us. The music that is in the air cannot make itself audible to us except along the line of the music that is first in the soul.

Nor again, however simple and honest its intent, can a soul come to the stature of reaching with easy approach such a tremendous reality as that of a Christ risen or of a human life that goes on forever and ever, if it is an unfed soul, and is starving its unutterable possibilities of vision and experience by attempting to feed them upon that which is not bread. I believe there is nothing in all the great range of truths brought before us in

this volume that will not fasten itself to the soul, if only the soul has fed itself upon the heavenly manna of the pure truth of God as it comes into the world and into the heart, in the life and death of the mysterious Man of the Gospel.

Manifold and distracting and wearisome as may be the details of our workaday experience here on the earth, nevertheless we must find a time and a place for the soul's culture, for the nourishing into stature of its waiting powers and towering possibilities, that just as naturally push their way up into the region of truth and of the big realities, as the vegetable germ, fed upon the dew and the sunshine, lengthens itself into the air and toward the firmament. Huxley will not help us much; Mill will not help us much; even Herbert Spencer will not make either the temporal or the eternal world altogether bright around us. The true solvent of Christian problem is Christian growth. These great matters to which these pages are devoted are matters for *us*, and for us to know and to rejoice and triumph in, and to be confident and expectant over. If they are a suspicion not only, but a vast assurance, they make to-day glorious, all time immense, and the great life eternal precious and real.

But we have got to grow to it, and that, too, by nourishing our souls on that divine meat that will produce growth. And we *are* growing to it. That is why we can ask Job's old question with at least a different inflection from that with which Job asked it. If there is some interrogation in the question still, there is less than there was five thousand years ago. It is a good while; but even a little gain is a great gain. That is why the world's celebration of Christ's emergence from the tomb is something beside performance. It is partly ceremony to be sure. There is in the celebration more music than confidence, more flowers than unquestioning assurance. But there is in it some confidence that is entire, some assurance that is absolute. And that is why from century to century the Easter festival of resurrection and of life eternal means always more and more. With all that there is about it that is worldly, petty, and foolish, there is nevertheless a body of men and women that are

approaching more and more closely to the reality of things, that are growing in all the best elements of growth, that are pushing out their own horizon till things that lay before the sunrise and beyond the sunset are standing forth into view. They are feeding themselves upon the Bread of life. They are growing up into the knowledge of God. The slow tuition of the centuries and of the divine Spirit is letting them farther and more deeply into the ineffable Presence.

The world is not meaning less, and threescore and ten do not mean less, and man is not becoming small to human regard, but thought, with those tendrils of delicate passion that sincere thought always runs out into, is twining itself more closely about the larger world of which this present world is but the antechamber; about the greater life of which this present life is only vestibule, and above all about God, and God, too, as the world knows Him in Jesus Christ. I do not say this of all, but it is true of some, and where that "some" is going, where that minority, standing in the van with heaven-turned faces sun-crowned, is going, the rest are going to follow, though it be longer after to-day than to-day is after the day when Job asked, "If a man die shall he live again?"

To know God is to be sure of immortality. Even to believe in God is to suspect immortality; but to know God is to be sure of immortality; for to know Him is to know His infinite tenderness toward His children; and the child that God loves is going to be taken care of, and the cradled child of such a Father never will be rocked to a slumber that knows no waking.

C. H. Parkhurst.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

To the memory of his eldest son,

ALFRED H. READ:

An earnest and efficient worker in the Church and
the community ; who departed this life
at the early age of twenty-four
years and two months,

This book is lovingly dedicated
by the author.

PREFACE

A VAST and mysterious problem is presented by death. The great procession of the human race is steadily marching on. Its progress is as ceaseless as is the flow of time. Each member of the mighty host keeps his own path and that path leads to an open grave. The race will move on as it has been moving for thousands of years. But for the individual who drops out of the ranks the grave appears to be the end of life, and of everything with which life was connected.

Is it true that the grave is the end? This is a question of universal and of vital interest. It concerns the beggar who wanders about the streets as truly and as fully as it does the rich man in his luxurious home or the king upon his throne. The one is no weaker in the presence of death than are either of the others. And each man will either perish when he dies, or will take his own self — just that and only that — into the world which lies beyond the range of his earthly vision.

The answer which the careful inquirer obtains is that the grave is not the end of existence. Death merely marks the close of the earthly pilgrimage. Only the body perishes. The soul lives on. The place of abode has been changed, and the conditions of life are very different from those which prevailed on earth. But the real person does not die.

When a man is fully convinced of this he will, if wise, ask himself if there is not to be something after death with which he should be far more deeply concerned than he is with the fact of death itself. He must admit the possibility that there may be something of a very serious nature awaiting him after he crosses the line that separates the living from the dead. It is worth his while to learn what he can regarding the quality of life in the world to come, and to strive to so live here as to secure a condition of endless blessedness hereafter.

Then, too, every one has relatives or friends who have passed into the spiritual world. And each individual must long to know how it fares with these dear ones in their new abode. He cannot help asking himself whether they are happy, or miserable,

or unconscious. He wonders whether they remember him, and whether they will be waiting to greet him as he sets forth, as he must ere long, to the realm of departed souls. Many other questions, in some of which he must have a profound personal interest, will crowd upon his mind when he allows himself to think seriously upon the subject of death and what is to become of him after he dies.

In this book an effort has been made to answer these questions as far as it is possible to do so. And in order that a good foundation might be laid for an intelligent study of the effect that death has upon the human being, and of the conditions of the life that is to follow death, we have made a careful study of the nature of man and the problem of his existence both here and hereafter. Thus equipped we have endeavored to gain all possible information regarding the nature of the home to which our departed friends have gone, and to which we are on the way, and of the quality of life in the unseen but very far from unreal realm. We have also considered the relation of the character that is formed here to the conditions of life hereafter, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the great consummation of the kingdom of God.

An effort has been made to find what people of all ages and all lands have thought upon these great subjects. The ancient beliefs of the Hindus and kindred faiths have been studied, as well as the principles of modern systems of religion, and of various philosophical forms of belief. The teachings of modern science, in its relation to these themes, have also been given. But in all questions concerning the future life the Bible has been accepted as the supreme authority. Quotations, in all cases, have been from the Revised Version.

It is the earnest hope of the writer that this book will give courage to many who have been living in fear of death; that it will cause those of his readers who have been negligent in the past to make immediate preparation for the inevitable coming of the messenger that will call them from this world; and that it will cheer those who mourn the departure of relatives and friends from earth, with the thought that wherever our loved ones may be, they still live, and that the same God who has cared for us in the past will continue to love and to watch over us, each and all, forevermore.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

In the course of the preparation of this volume scores of books, some of them covering a large field; many others treating only a single topic or a small group of topics; and quite a number relating to the subject only incidentally, have been consulted. Where important quotations have been made it has been the rule to give the name of the author and the title of the volume at the foot of the page. Then, too, many religious papers and magazines, and numerous sermons to which the writer has listened, have given helpful hints and suggestions. Many friends, also, have aided him by their kindly interest in the progress of the work. While the author alone is responsible for what the book contains, he acknowledges his obligation to all of these sources of information and encouragement.

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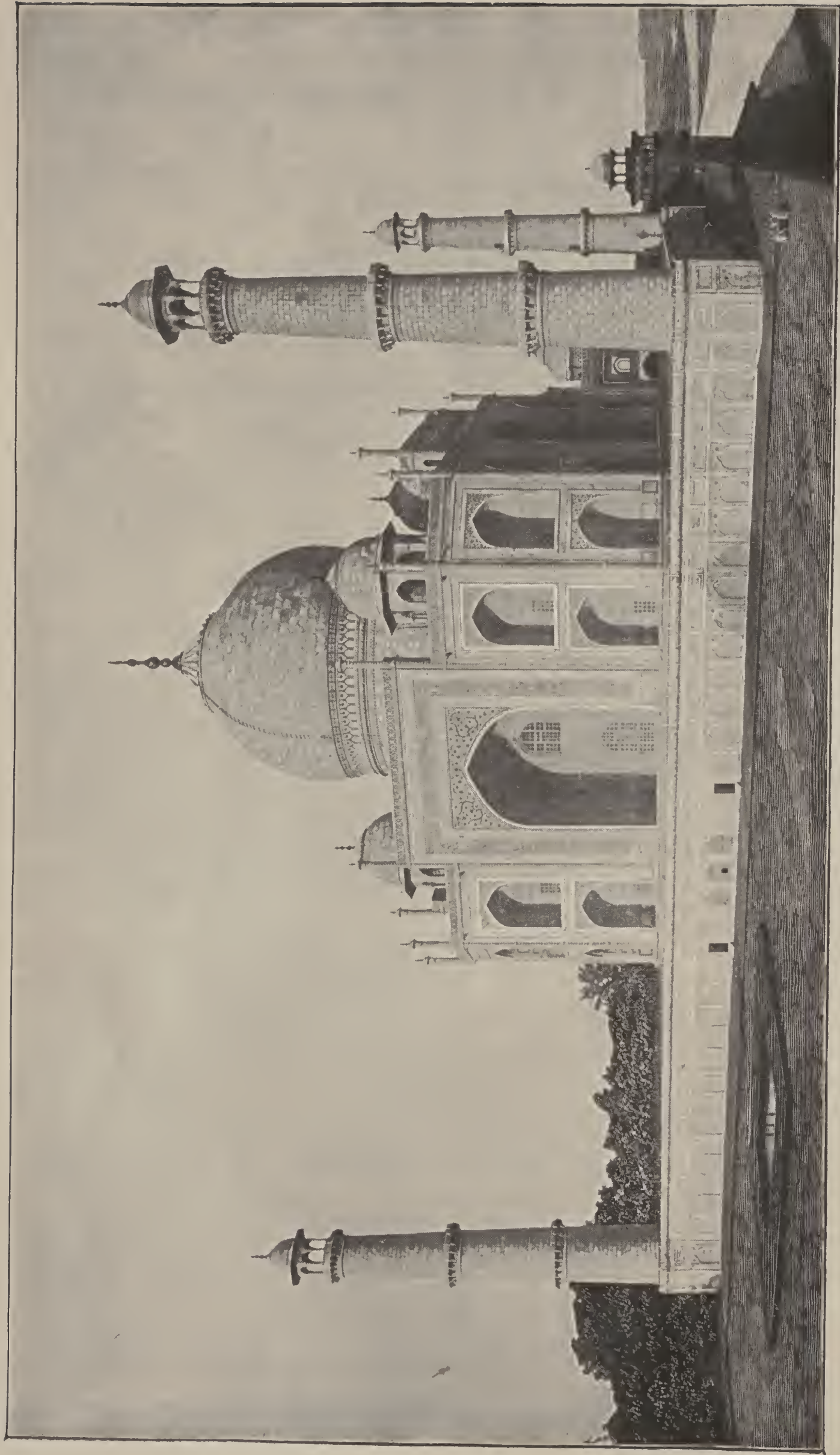
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TAJ MAHAL. MAUSOLEUM AT AGRA, INDIA.

PART I

THE NATURE OF MAN

CHAPTER I

A COMPLEX BEING

IN order to reach any intelligent conclusion in regard to the effect of death upon the individual who comes under its power, it will be necessary to first consider the nature of man. We must learn whether, as some assert, he is the creature of a day and the victim of conditions which he cannot control, or is, as others affirm, an immortal being with the power of working out a destiny for good or evil as he may choose. For what man will be after his earthly life has closed must depend upon what he is here and now.

If man is merely material, if he is only a creature of the earth, having within himself no germ or potentiality of a higher existence, death must, so far as consciousness and intelligence are concerned, end all. It will come at the close of a great series of changes through which the man has passed during his life, and will itself be the "last great change" of which he will ever have knowledge. His body will be separated into the primary elements of which it was composed, and the man, as a personal being, will be known no more forever. But if, in addition to the body, man has a higher, nobler, and more enduring personality, if he is a spiritual as well as a material being, the effect of death will be widely different. The body will pass away in the same manner that it would if it were all that belonged to him, but the man himself, though under very different conditions than those which here prevail, will survive.

From the very nature of the case the animal part of man must perish at death. It is equally in accordance with the "constitution of things" that if he has a nature that is energized by a Divine Spirit the grave will be only a milestone in

the line of a continuous life. It is certain that the material man cannot long endure. The only hope that anything in the way of conscious existence awaits the person who has come under the power of death lies in the possession of a spiritual nature which derived its existence from God.

In the study of this great problem regarding the nature of man, investigators have reached many and widely different conclusions. This is due to various causes. Men differ greatly as to their mental temperament, and facts that would appeal strongly to some would have but little weight with others. Some, too, have had better opportunities for learning the truth, or have been more careful observers than their fellow students, while others, it is to be feared, have been so anxious to sustain some preconceived theory that they have not been able to divest themselves of prejudice. In these and other somewhat similar ways it is possible to account for all the differences in the conclusions to which these thinkers have arrived.

Many and conflicting views.

It would neither be possible nor desirable to explain all the theories of the nature of man which have been held in the past, or which even now have more or less adherents. For the purpose of this book it will only be necessary to briefly state the principal ideas which have gained a wide degree of acceptance.

According to the believers in the monistic theory, there is but one principle of being in the universe. All phenomena, of whatever kind or nature, are to be referred to this "ultimate substance." But just what this substance is, the people who hold to this general idea are not agreed.

The monistic theory.

The materialists hold that matter is the source of phenomena, and that there is nothing immaterial in the universe. They believe that what is called the soul is only a function of matter, and that when the body perishes the man himself passes out of existence. These men hold the doctrine in its most radical form. Many others who range themselves with the monists believe that there is a spirit in man, though they do not acknowledge the existence of a personal God, while still others hold that there may be some sort of a spirit in the universe, but deny that anything which can properly be designated as spirit is found in man. Those who make a distinction between the body and soul define them as different phases of the same substance.

Materialists.

The idealists, though holding their general theory in widely different forms, go very far in the other direction. They, too, assume that there is only one source of phenomena, but this they believe to be mental or spiritual instead of material. The spiritual everywhere holds sway. Matter is merely a form of its manifestation. As material things cannot form themselves, an exercise of spiritual power must precede their appearance. Some go so far as to claim that things can "have no existence when not objects of thought." Others, as described by Emerson, say "the senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves they cannot tell." The general doctrine appears to be that whatever has an existence has it only in mental conception. *Idealists.*

A third class, who are ranged as pantheists, assert that neither matter nor mind is substantial. They hold that everything of which we have knowledge is spiritual. Their theory has been condensed into the single sentence, "There is but one substance and that substance is God." *Pantheists.*

The two extremes of the monistic philosophy are represented on the one hand by those who believe that all being is matter, of which spirit is the highest form, and on the other by those who hold that all being is spirit, of which what is designated as matter is merely a phenomenal manifestation.

Another class of people believe that man has a dual nature. He has a material body, but connected with it in some mysterious manner is something which is described as a soul. The latter is the person, the real man, and is inseparable from the body during its life upon earth. By the great majority who hold this view of the constitution of man the soul is believed to survive the vast change which is wrought by death. *The dual nature.*

In teaching His disciples that they should not be afraid of men, who can only kill the body, but at the same time warning them that they should fear God, who is able to destroy both soul and body, Christ plainly taught at least a dual nature of man. Besides, the whole significance of His work is to be found in the fact that man is something more than a mere animal. Unless man has a soul, and that soul is immeasurably superior to his body, there is no conceivable reason why Christ should have come into the world.

Some who hold the doctrine of the dual nature of man believe that the mind itself is dual. There is not merely a difference in the character of mental operations, but there are two distinct mental organizations. These are named the objective and the subjective mind.¹ Though it would seem to indicate the presence of a third principle, this theory makes only two great elements in the nature of man. His entire being is described as body and soul.

There is also a widely spread belief that instead of having only a single or a dual organization man has a threefold nature.

The threefold nature.

In addition to the body and the soul, which those who hold the theory of the dual nature recognize, many believe that man possesses a spirit. This spirit is intimately connected with the soul, but, curiously enough, some represent it as an inferior and others as a superior principle. Some hold that spirit is the animating force of both body and soul, the principle which gives life to both. Others hold that the soul is the seat of various desires and appetites which are manifested through the bodily organization, as well of a higher class of activities, while the term "spirit" should be used to designate only the purest and noblest qualities of the mind and heart. Probably all who hold the latter view regard the principal characteristics of the soul as spiritual.

The belief that man is a complex being is of ancient origin. From the earliest ages of which we have any knowledge of the

An early belief.

Egyptians they believed that man consisted of at least three essential parts. In addition to the body and the soul they recognized something which has been variously interpreted as "the ghost, the image, the double, or the genius." This, no matter by what name it was designated, was the most important part of the man. It was constantly with him from birth until death.

A threefold nature is also recognized by various Scripture writers. Some commentators claim that this doctrine was not

Appears in Scripture.

generally held by the ancient Jews, and that it finds no real support in the Old Testament. Though soul and spirit are mentioned, as well as the body, it is claimed that the terms were very loosely used and that the dual theory generally prevailed. According to this interpretation, soul and

¹ T. J. Hudson, *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*.

spirit are not regarded as separate constituents of the personality. The man was thought of as having a spirit, just as he had a body, but the real being, the man himself, was a soul. The body and spirit were in harmony with each other, but were greatly inferior to the soul.

Other writers have insisted that the Old Testament fully teaches the doctrine of a threefold nature of man. They assert that the teaching is to the effect that man has a body, in common with the brute creation. This body, like the body of an animal, perishes at death. The vital principle, which is often termed life, or soul, is also possessed in common by man and beast. But a conviction of the immense difference between men and animals led to the adoption of a more complete classification which would make this great dissimilarity manifest. Thus the term "spirit" came into use to designate a principle which is immeasurably superior to anything that is held in common by men and brutes.

Among the Greeks and Romans the doctrine of the threefold nature was held with varying degrees of clearness, and it appeared in the earliest Christian writings. But some- Modification of belief. where about the fourth century the "soul and spirit" came in theological writings to be identified in substance, and distinguished only in function." From that time the dual theory has had many advocates, though it has never won anything approaching unanimous acceptance.

The dual theory, as already shown, seems to have support in the words of Christ, but the Apostle Paul clearly states a belief in three great divisions of the being of man. Yet Christ and Paul. the two forms of speaking are not antagonistic.

The teaching of Christ was always simple and direct. He did not employ metaphysical terms when those of ordinary conversation would answer the purpose which was to be served. So, as the disciples were going forth to preach the Gospel, He told them to have no fear of men who, at most, could only kill the body, but to remember that God was "able to destroy both soul and body." It is evident that in the term "soul" He included all the higher powers of the man. But when the apostle speaks of body, soul, and spirit, he enters more into detail. Probably the soul was regarded as the individual life which each man has separate and distinct from any and every other man, while the

spirit designated the force which God breathed into man, and which at death must return unto Him. Another explanation of the threefold theory is that the soul was regarded as a sort of "envelope of the spirit." It is inside the body but outside of the spirit, and will serve as the body of the spirit in a future life.

Still another doctrine of the human constitution is held by the Theosophists, or Occultists. According to their view the threefold distinction, though less objectionable than the dual theory, is entirely inadequate. They believe that man consists of seven parts. Of these, four, the Kâma, Prâna, Linga Sharîra, and Sthula Sharîra, are perishable. The remaining three, Atmâ, Buddhi, and Manas, are immortal. The Manas, however, is dual while life on this earth is maintained. It has both a higher and a lower class of functions, and forms a sort of connecting link between the physical and spiritual natures.

A writer¹ who is said to have received his information through Madam Blavatsky "directly from the Great Lodge of Initiates," has given the theosophical classification in English terms. Here the seven principles of man are said to be The Body, Vitality, Astral Body, Animal Soul, Human Soul, Spiritual Soul, and Spirit. The three last named are known in the Sanskrit language as the Manas, Buddhi, and Atmâ, and are substantially the same as noted in the preceding classification. Atmâ is spirit, Buddhi is the highest power of the intellect, and Manas is the mind. These three principles constitute the real man, and survive the change called death. The four lower principles are merely the agents or instruments of the higher ones. They are the means by which the man obtains a knowledge of himself and his surroundings. When the necessity for their use ceases, they become disorganized and are soon resolved into the atoms of which they were originally composed.

Numerous other theories have been advanced, as well as various modifications of the ones which have here been described. Some of these might be of interest, but enough have been stated to show that many patient investigators have earnestly and diligently sought to solve the problem which is presented by the wonderful nature of man.

¹ A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism*.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE

IN each and every theory of the human constitution which has ever been advanced there is much that is mysterious. There are many things relating to man for which the materialist can offer no explanation. The body is constantly changing. In about seven years a complete transformation is effected. By the time a man reaches middle life he has had several bodies. The material part of the man has been changed time and time again. Yet the man himself remains. If he had nothing but a material existence, the man himself would have been changed. He could not have remained the same through all the processes of construction and reconstruction which have been constantly going on, and which have resulted in the repeated substitution of a new body for the one already in use. There are various other things, such as the exercise of powers in somnambulism which are not active when man is in his normal state, which cannot be explained upon any theory of materialism, which will be referred to at a later stage of this work.

All theories involved in mystery.

The dual theory also presents difficulties. How the soul exists within and acts throughout the body is a mystery which the closest student has never been able to explain, and which no one is likely to make plain. Professor Tyndall admitted that "the problem of the connection of the body and soul is as insoluble as it was in the prescientific ages." The mystery of the union will be fully solved only when the union is destroyed by death. Those who hold to the threefold nature of man and believers in the sevenfold theory are also obliged to admit that connected with the existence of man there are problems for which they have no means of obtaining a solution.

The fact that there are mysteries connected with the being of man should not be thought strange. There is mystery everywhere. The student of nature finds mysteries as numerous and

as impenetrable as does the student of man. The scientist is as often compelled to acknowledge ignorance as is the theologian. The theory of gravitation, for instance, is admitted by scientists to "involve paradoxes to this day unexplained." For another example of mystery in the natural world take that mighty but invisible agent called electricity. Man knows a great deal about its energy, he is able to control it to some extent and to make it serve his purposes, but connected with it are vast mysteries which baffle all his investigations.

In the vegetable world man is also in the realm of mystery. In the growth of a plant or a tree there are many things which no one can explain. How each seed has wrapped up in itself its own peculiar organization, and how it develops into a plant or a tree and brings forth fruit after its own kind and never after any other kind, have been common mysteries for ages, and will remain mysteries in spite of all the learned expositions which are put forth to make plain the laws of the vegetable world. How the plant selects from the soil just those elements which it needs, and in the exact proportions in which they are required, and rejects other elements which are not needed or which would be injurious, is another phenomenon of constant occurrence which man cannot explain.

The list of mysteries in the natural world might be increased indefinitely. They are all around us. They cannot be denied, yet there are no means by which they can be made clear. There is a constant call for the exercise of faith. The man who will not believe anything which he cannot fully understand will believe but very little. He will be as much of a doubter in the natural world as he is in the spiritual realm.

The mystery in which the real nature of man is enfolded naturally leads to a consideration of the source of his being.

The source of being. This is a matter, not merely of interest, but of vital importance, in an investigation regarding his existence. It becomes doubly momentous when, as in the present case, an effort is to be made to trace his future after his present life has closed.

It is both the privilege and the duty of every man to inquire whence he came and by what means he has reached his present position. Vast interests are at stake. Man wants to

know, and ought to know, whether his appearance in the world was an accident, and he is merely a waif upon the ocean of time, to be tossed about for a brief period by wind or wave and then be lost in eternal oblivion, or whether he owes his existence to a Being who has made vast provisions for his welfare here and hereafter, and who will never leave him unless His care is resolutely and persistently rejected.

An important question.

Here, as elsewhere, there is a wide diversity of opinion. Many legends of antiquity and numerous theories of ancient and modern philosophers attempt to account for the appearance of man in the world. Not a few of the former are fanciful and foolish, and among the latter are some which, in their efforts to eliminate the idea of a Divine power and release mankind from what is sometimes designated as superstition, make far greater drafts upon faith than belief in a personal Creator requires.

Different views.

Long-continued efforts have been made to prove that life is, under certain conditions, spontaneously generated. The claim has been made that this theory had been proved to be true. But later experiments, conducted with a greater degree of care, have resulted in utter failure. Those great masters of science, Professors Tyndall and Huxley, admitted their inability to find life where there was no preëxistent life from which it could be derived. The tendency of the present time is strongly away from the doctrine that proclaims "mindless atoms," without the intervention of a force outside and above themselves, as the origin of man. It is very generally admitted that no life can be produced by lifeless matter. With very few exceptions the scholars of the present day recognize some Power, unseen and, as far as natural science can go, to a great extent unknown, as the source of the being of man. This Power the Christian knows and reveres as God.

Life not spontaneous.

Of all the early histories or representations of the origin of man the Hebrew Scriptures furnish the one account that is worthy of a careful consideration. They treat the subject with extreme brevity, but in a manner as clear and positive as all other accounts are vague and uncertain. In them we find the sublime declaration, "God created man in His own image." Here is the germ of the story of the coming of man into the world. Here we have the history of his origin.

The creation of man.

Here, too, we get a glimpse of his possible destiny. The fact that he was created by God, and in the very image of his Creator, proves that he has a spiritual as well as a material nature, and is a strong indication that his existence will reach far beyond the term of his earthly life.

While the author of the book of Genesis is positive in regard to the fact that God created man, he does not clearly state the method by which this great work was performed.

A direct act.

For a long period it was held that man was the result of a single creative act. According to this theory he was not only the crowning work of creation, but from the first moment of his life was perfect in form, brilliant in intellect, and pure in heart.

The present condition of the race shows a terrible decline from this supposed original condition of man. Vast numbers

Degradation.

of people are living in the savage state, and many tribes are not above the rank of barbarians. Even where the highest degree of civilization has been reached and the purest form of religion prevails, the condition of mankind is not to be compared with the peace and happiness of life in the garden which the Bible describes as their earliest home. This appalling change is by many attributed to a violation of a command of God. According to this doctrine the fall of man from an original state of holiness to a state of sin accounts for all the dark problems of existence and is the source of all the evils that afflict the world. Whatever may be thought regarding the cause, the fact of this vast difference from a state of purity and peace is manifest to all.

The great advance of science in recent times and the results of investigations and discoveries in the natural world have led to a revision of many of the earlier religious beliefs.

Later views.

Thus it has come to pass that new opinions have been formed regarding the means by which the work of the creation of man was performed. As far as the present duty of man is concerned, it does not matter in the least which of these theories is correct. But as will appear in some of the subsequent chapters of this book, it may have a decided influence upon the degree of his responsibility here and, if he survives that event, upon his condition when he enters a different state of being at death. Therefore it seems desirable to note briefly

a theory which has largely supplanted the once almost universally received idea that the creation of man was the result of a single act of God. This theory is known as evolution. It was held in a vague form by the early Hindus, but it is only in comparatively recent years that it has been shown to have a scientific basis.

According to this theory man did not receive his present form as the result of a single creative act. In the beginnings of what has since developed into man there was neither intellectual power, moral responsibility, nor a human body. The high position which he holds at the present day has been reached by a process of development from a very low stage of life, perhaps from a single cell, through a long series of forms and countless ages of time. Believers in this system are divided into several schools. These vary greatly in their opinions as to the details of the process, but are one in a belief in a general principle of evolution as opposed to that of a direct creation.

In its extreme form this theory has been rejected by the great mass of believers in the Bible. It could not be reconciled with the teachings of the Scriptures, because it had no place for God either in the creation or the preservation of the universe. The evidences presented in its behalf were not sufficiently convincing to lead many believers to surrender their faith in the Word of God. The vast majority of reading and thinking men were not persuaded to give up all idea of spiritual forces and accept a purely materialistic philosophy.

There are, however, other forms in which the theory of evolution is held and which are not inconsistent with the account of the creation as found in the book of Genesis or in conflict with any of the leading doctrines of the Christian religion. In one or the other of these forms it is held probably by the great majority of scientists and by large numbers of Christian preachers and laymen. The former base their belief upon the results of investigation. The latter accept the theory because it appears to them "to harmonize better with the general spirit of biblical teaching" than does any other explanation of the creative process, and also because a great number of able men, many of them firm believers in God, who

Evolution.

A form opposed to Scripture.

Forms in harmony with the Bible.

have been trained in scientific methods and have made it a subject of careful and long-continued study, are fully convinced that it is true.

Of the Christian evolutionists some are far more radical than others. Many believe that while the general process of the creation has been one of development, or evolution, *Probable interventions.* there have at various times been direct interventions of the Power which in the main has been working along a well-defined line of progress. They do not admit the probability, or perhaps the possibility, that by any course of natural laws the inorganic was ever changed to the organic, the vegetable ever became the animal, or that man has been developed from even the highest type of the purely animal creation. They hold that these great chasms must have been bridged by direct creative acts, each of which, in its turn, was followed by a long period of progress according to the natural laws of development.

Others, who are equally reverent believers in a personal God, are less conservative. They "believe that God has but one way of doing things; that His way may be described in *Only by development.* one word as the way of growth, or development, or evolution."¹ They believe in a continuous progress rather than in long periods of development with occasional interventions which interfere with its orderly course.

This progress has continued through unnumbered ages. It has been exceedingly slow. There have been many partial retrogressions. But in the main there has been a steady advance. The simplest organisms have been followed by those which were complex, and through the influences of environment, natural selection, use and disuse, and various other principles, the line of being has reached up to man.

In neither of the forms in which the theory of evolution is held by those who are in sympathy with the Christian religion does it detract from the power or wisdom or glory *Glorifies God.* of God as manifested in the great work of creation. On the contrary, it greatly exalts these attributes of the Creator. The belief that "the first living germ, whenever and however created, was infused with power to give birth to higher species"² is certainly a higher conception of God than the theory that a

¹ Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., *The Theology of an Evolutionist*.

² Professor John M. Tyler, *The Whence and the Whither of Man*.

creative act was required for the production of each of the great classes of beings which have appeared upon the earth.

There should be no antagonism between the believers in the old interpretation of the method of creation and the "theistic evolutionist." As to the Author of the universe both are agreed. The question upon which they are *A question of methods.* divided relates only to the means which have been adopted for the accomplishment of His purposes. The one class believe in the exertion of almighty power at many different stages. Some even hold that it has been manifested at every great stage, in the work of creation. Others hold that a smoother and more orderly plan has been followed. The latter accept Professor John Fiske's definition of evolution as "God's way of doing things." They believe in the same God as those who think the older theory more scriptural or more probable. The different views which they hold regarding the way in which God works does not make them less loyal as His subjects or less efficient workers for the advancement of His spiritual kingdom in the world.

According to the theory of evolution, progress is the natural law of the universe. It teaches that man, in common with the whole creation, is on the upward path. Its doctrine *Progression.* is that, though evil and suffering are in the world, things are really and constantly working for the benefit of whatever is worthy of continued existence.

The possibility of progress is admitted by those who hold the theory of degradation which has already been noted. They believe that the evil tendencies of man can be counteracted. In support of their belief in both degradation and progression, they point to the fact that nations which were once enlightened and powerful have decayed on account of their iniquities, while other peoples, by the acceptance of Christianity and the application of its principles, have been raised from a state of debasement to one of influence and power.

Even here the Christian evolutionist is not widely separated from the most literal interpreter of the account given in the book of Genesis of the fall of man. Both believe that sin is in the world and that it is the enemy of God and man. The one claims that when man reached the point at which he was able to understand moral truth he came under the dominion of the

moral law. The other thinks that the truth was made clear to man in the very beginning of his life. Both hold that man is responsible for his sin. Both assert that he is now endowed with a spiritual nature and that he is capable of either an unlimited improvement or a terrible degeneration.

Whether we accept the doctrine that man was created by a single exertion of power, or, with the evolutionist, believe that

A creative act. he has come into the world as the result of a vast number of changes in form and capacity, we must confess that an intelligent and almighty Being has been concerned in his origin. By claiming that man has been developed from the lowest form of matter we only put the creative act farther in the background. It is utterly impossible to conceive of its elimination. The period of its exercise may have been infinitely remote, but there must have been such an act, and no act can commit itself.

Concerning man, in his search for the origin of life, one of the greatest of scientists, Herbert Spencer, declared that "amid

An infinite Creator. the mysteries, which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed." The Christian evolutionist believes a great deal more than this. He recognizes not only the Infinite force that is behind and within all the phenomena of creation, but he also claims a definite personal relationship with the Being from whom that energy proceeds.

Whatever view may be taken of the process of the creation of man, the facts which relate to his condition, both in the past

Man the child of God. and at the present time, admit of no explanation that leaves a Power which is at once infinite and divine out of the account. Whether man was created in his present form, or has reached the plane of humanity by innumerable changes through countless ages, does not in the least degree affect the nature of his origin. It matters not whether the relationship was established by a single creative act or by a process of development. In either case we have the glorious truth that man is the child of God.

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL DEATH

“It is appointed unto man once to die.” Such is the declaration of Scripture, and the experience of the human race in all the ages since mankind appeared upon the earth has shown the absolute truth of this tremendous affirmation. *Death inevitable.* Death is the one thing, and the only thing, which to every human being is an absolute certainty.

When a child is born no one can tell whether its life will be long or short, happy or miserable. As to whether the life that has just commenced will be a success or a failure, no one can speak with the slightest degree of authority. Upon these points the wisest man is as ignorant as is the one with the most limited mental powers. But the most unlearned man can assert without the slightest hesitation, and with the absolute certainty that his prediction will be fulfilled, that this new life will eventually come under the dominion of death.

Here, as far as any individual case is concerned, human foresight ends. Mortality statistics show that of each one thousand children who are born, a certain proportion will die in infancy. The number who will reach the various stages of childhood, youth, middle life, and old age *Time and circumstances unknown.* can also be determined with a considerable degree of accuracy. But which of the individuals will fall at any specified point in the march of life is entirely beyond the range of human knowledge.

Neither can any one tell how death will make its appearance to any individual. It can be assumed with a considerable degree of certainty that of each one thousand deaths in a given locality a certain proportion will be caused by accident, that another proportion, which can be very closely estimated, will be due to fevers, and so on through the list of the principal diseases which prevail in that locality. But all this affects only the community at large. It throws no light whatever upon the fate of the

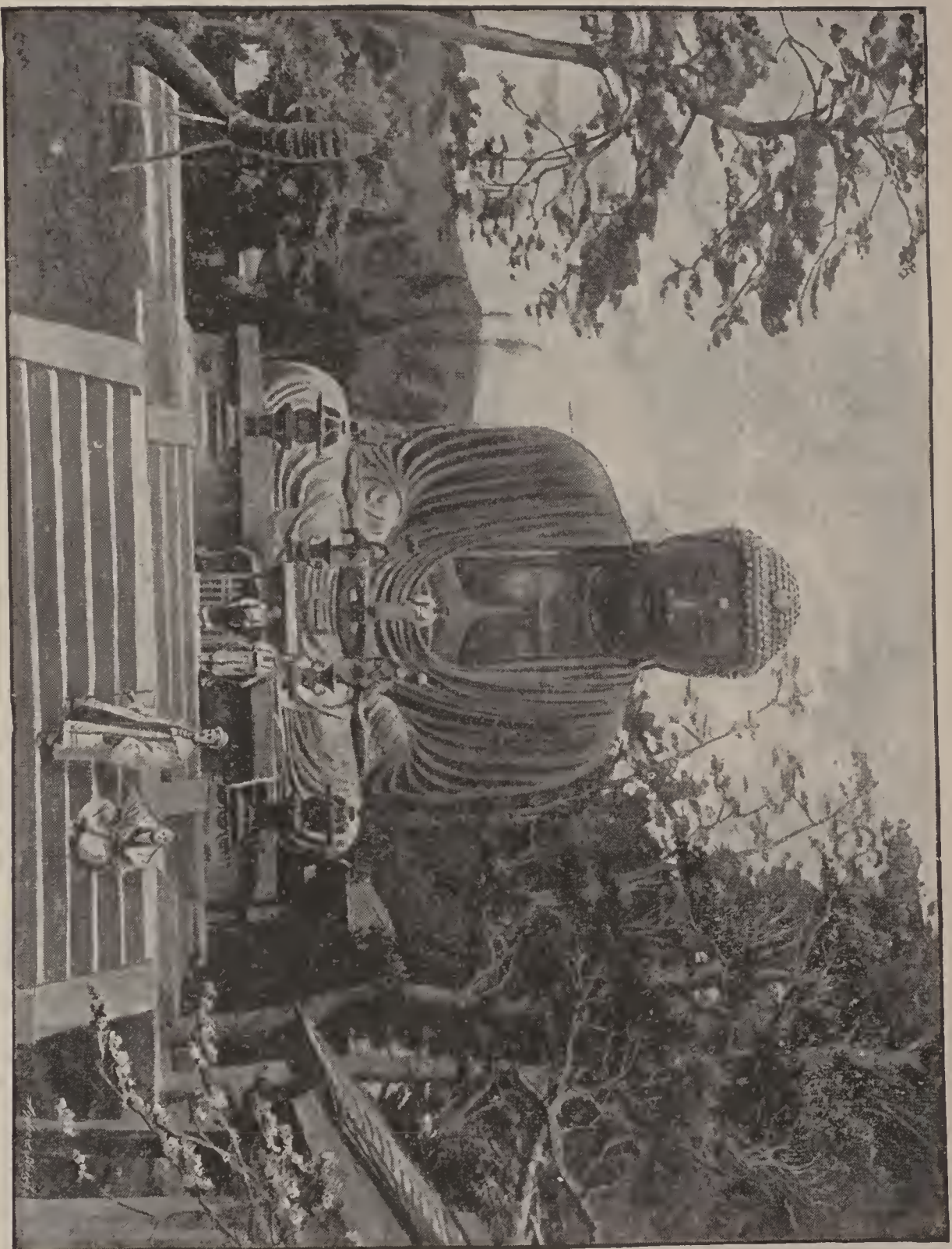
individual. Whether death will come to him by accident, by a sudden and violent sickness, or as the last scene of a long and weary illness, cannot be foretold.

Neither can any one tell where the individual will meet his great enemy, death. Whether he will be at home or abroad, in the street or in the office, in the shop or in the field, no one can know. Concerning the time and the manner and the place in which death will appear to any person, and the circumstances by which its coming will be attended, no light can be obtained.

The one thing regarding the death of the individual that is certainly known is that sooner or later it will occur. As certainly as night follows day death will follow birth. This fact is recognized by all forms of religion and all systems of philosophy. Attention to the laws of hygiene may, if continued through many generations, prolong the present average period of human life. It is not impossible that this period may be increased several years. But neither this nor any other form of effort can prevent the coming of death. As in the past, so in the future, this dread visitor will come to all men and will conquer all opposition.

There is an Eastern tradition that a young mother whose only child had died carried the body to all of her neighbors, and asked for medicine that would restore him to health. They agreed that she must have lost her mind, for it was plain to see that the child was dead. At length she met a man who, in answer to her request, said that he could not give her medicine for her child, but directed her to Buddha. When she found this great physician, she cried, "Lord and Master, give me the medicine that will cure my boy." In reply Buddha called for a handful of mustard seed. In full confidence that she could easily procure it the mother was joyfully turning away, when Buddha added, "The mustard seed must be taken from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent, or friend." The mother went from one house to another, and all of the people sympathized with her, and offered her mustard seed, but to her inquiry, "Did a son or daughter, a father or mother, die in your family?" they all answered, "Alas! the living are few, but the dead are many." Weary and disappointed, she returned to Buddha, who said, "You thought that you alone had lost a son. The law of death is that among all living creatures there is nothing that abides."

Death universal.



THE IMAGE OF BUDDHA.

Go where we will we find that this great "law of death" prevails. There is mourning everywhere for relatives and friends who once engaged in the activities and the enjoyments of life, but whose forms will be seen on earth no more. Wherever we turn our eyes, we see that

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair."

And we need no prophetic voice to warn us that, like the myriads who have preceded us in this world, we too shall pass away. The law of death is universal and inexorable. Live, for a time, we may. Die, sooner or later, we must.

Death is not only certain, but is also imminent. It constantly threatens. No age or place or position gives exemption from its sway or can promise security from its grasp for an hour. The young and the aged, those who are *Death imminent.* in perfect health and those whose forms are wasted by illness, those who apparently are exposed to but few dangers as well as those whose active lives are seen to be in almost constant peril, the rich and the poor, the occupants of high places and those who are regarded as the lowly ones of earth, are all constantly exposed to the attack of the mighty destroyer. "In the midst of life we are in death."

The ancients believed that life was a constant resistance of death. Modern science teaches the same doctrine. Processes of waste and repair in all of the organs of the body and in the corpuscles of the blood are constantly *Life and death in conflict.* going on. This continuous replacement of worn-out cells by new ones, which are as constantly in the course of formation as the others are undergoing decay, is absolutely necessary to the preservation of life. This change Professor Huxley denominates local death. In its ordinary progress it is entirely unnoticed; but when it occurs on a large scale, as the result of an accident or of illness, it may be very painful, and its results may be serious. It may indeed be so extensive as to cause the death of the entire body. But within its proper limits this local death is the great preserver of life. If this were to cease, the whole machinery of life would stop at once and forever.

Even if we leave out of the account the great variety of acci-

dents to which man is continually exposed, and which menace him upon every hand, we shall still see that he is in constant danger from death. In order that health be continued, the equilibrium of conflicting forces in the bodily economy must be constantly maintained. If this is only slightly disturbed, illness will result. If the disturbance is serious, it must be promptly remedied, or the destruction of the physical organism will inevitably occur. The body of man is so complex, and there are so many points at which perfect adjustment is necessary to health, that it is not a matter for surprise that the term of life is comparatively brief. Chemical forces are constantly at work to tear down the human frame, and vital forces are equally persistent in the work of repair. But any one of a great number of causes may give the destructive forces an advantage which the vital energies will not be able to overcome, and this disturbance may result in death.

Doubtless every thoughtful person has often considered the original cause of this great change which we call death. Concerning the fact of death there can be no difference of opinion. Neither is there any marked disagreement as to the general means through which it becomes effective. But concerning its primary cause, what brought it upon man, there are widely differing theories.

It is not at all strange that upon this point men who believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures should not agree with those who reject the authority of revelation. But these are not the only classes who have different theories as to why death was sent, or was permitted to come, into the world. Men who accept as literal truth the narrative of the creation and the early history of man as found in the book of Genesis hold very dissimilar views as to the real cause of physical death.

Probably the most common belief has been that death came as the direct result of the disobedience to God by our first parents. This idea appears in the legends of various ancient peoples, was presented in the Talmud and other Jewish literature, and has been prominent among the doctrines of the Christian Church from its earliest days. The Westminster "Shorter Catechism" teaches that by their fall mankind were "made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever." Practically the

The primary cause of death.

The relation of death to sin.

same affirmation is made in the standards of doctrine of various other denominations.

The basis of this belief is found in the Scriptures. According to the narrative therein contained, the first man was forbidden to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in the garden which God had provided as his home. The penalty of disobedience was clearly defined and emphatically stated. No more solemn warning could have been given than that which was contained in the words, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But the command was violated, and man has ever since been subject to death.

In the New Testament we are told that "the wages of sin is death," and that "through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin." A very large class of people who give such passages their literal meaning hold that the general teaching of the Bible is that sin and physical death stand related to each other as cause and effect.

It does not appear to be certain, however, that physical death was threatened or that it came to man directly, if at all, as the result of sin. Many believe that the death which comes to man as the punishment of disobedience affects his spiritual rather than his physical nature.

*Perhaps spiritual
rather than physical
death.*

Instead of being, as the Westminster and certain other standards of faith declare, the death of the whole man, body as well as soul, they would limit the penalty to the death of the higher nature. The body, they claim, would have perished even if sin had not entered the world.

There are abundant reasons for the belief that, as far as his body is concerned, man was not made immortal. It does not appear to have been the design of the Creator that he should remain permanently upon the earth. Had there been no removal of those who came into the world, the earth would long ago have become so densely peopled that it could not support its inhabitants. This, it is true, does not necessitate death, for God could have taken man from his earthly home by some other means, but it does show that this world was not intended to be his perpetual residence.

There are many who believe that physical death was a part of the original plan of creation. The lower animals have always been subject to death, and, as man is subject to the same physio-

logical laws and processes as the beast, there appears to be no reason why his life should persist if the life of the beast is to terminate. The life of man, like the life of the beast, commences with an organic cell. This cell life, as has already been explained, is subject to the action of the opposing forces of waste and repair, but in time the destructive energies will prevail, and the body, as an organized mechanism, will perish. This seems as natural as it is inevitable.

*Physical death
part of the plan
of creation.*

From this point of view death appears to be the legitimate effect of a law which has prevailed since life first appeared upon the earth. It was one of the doctrines of the Hindus that "everything that is born, or brought into being, and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution." Lord Bacon affirmed that "it is as natural to die as to be born." The fact that man has his periods of growth, maturity, and decline is an indication that his removal from the world is in accordance with an original and well-defined law of his being.

Another reason why many refuse to believe that physical death was brought upon man as a result of his sin is the fact that death was in the world for untold ages before man appeared. Not only did countless numbers of individual animals perish, but thousands of species passed out of existence. The theory advanced by Dr. Horace Bushnell, and which has found not a few advocates, that during all this vast period death reigned in anticipation of the sin of man, is more ingenious than it is convincing. It does not seem right that punishment should precede transgression. But this theory presents the additional difficulty of accounting for a vast amount of suffering falling upon innocent victims merely in anticipation of the disobedience of an entirely different class of creatures.

*The anticipative
theory.*

It is doubtless true that "the creation was subjected to vanity" on account of the sin of man, and that much of the suffering in the animal world is due to the relation which exists between him and the lower orders. This is a dark problem, but it may be explained in part by the fact that the disorganized and often hostile condition of nature shows man something of the evil of sin, and is designed to be at once a means of his punishment and reformation. Nothing of this kind can be assumed regarding the destruction of animal life before the

coming of man. That the terrible effects of sin should have reached backward as well as have been its present accompaniment is hard to believe. It appears more reasonable to suppose that for some wise, but to us unknown, purpose the animal world was created subject to the law of death.

Still another argument, and one which seems very convincing to many people who believe that the penalty of sin was spiritual rather than physical death, and that the latter is to be regarded as proceeding from purely natural causes, is found in the fact that the disobedience of our first parents was not immediately followed by their removal from the world. If physical death had been the punishment predicted, it should have come at the time of the sin instead of hundreds of years afterward. Possibly the term "day" may have been used, as it often is in the Bible, in a figurative rather than in a literal sense, but it seems more probable that spiritual death, which may have passed upon the soul in the very moment of its transgression, was the punishment which was to be endured rather than the decay of the bodily powers.

*If physical death,
the penalty was
delayed.*

It does not seem possible to maintain the theory that human sin introduced physical death into the world. Death certainly preceded transgression. And in the very "constitution of things" there appears to be an absolute necessity for death. Our going out of the world is as much a part of the drama of life as is our coming into it. This is a world of change. Everything that lives has its time to die. Death is in harmony with the great processes of the natural world. There appears to be no reason why man should be permanent while everything around him is passing away, and the condition must be accepted, whether it is satisfactory or not. Death is, and will continue to be, as universal as life.

Death natural.

The belief that physical death is natural to man, that it is a part of his inheritance, is not in conflict with the belief that it stands in a very close relationship to sin. While it may not be regarded as the primary cause, there is still a very large sense in which it is true that moral wrong

"Brought death into the world and all our woe."

For while there would have been death, or its equivalent, if man had remained pure, it would have been very different from the death with which we are now only too familiar.

Sin did not create the necessity of the removal of man from the earth, but it did introduce a discordant and disorganizing element into the world. If man had remained sinless, the terrible accompaniments of death would have been unknown. There is no probability that departure from this life would have been attended by suffering or fear or disappointment. Death would have come as peacefully as sleep, and would have been as gladly welcomed, and there would have been no grief on the part of the survivors. The removal of a member of the family would have been viewed as calmly and cheerfully as a household now regards a journey which one of the number is to make to some delightful region or for the purpose of visiting relatives or friends who have already gone from home.

*Disobedience
brought all that
is terrible in
death.*

Great as is the contrast thus presented, it is but faint in comparison with what the reality would have proved. For in all earthly journeys and voyages there is always a feeling of uncertainty as to the outcome. Accidents may occur, or sickness, or disappointment may come. We cannot banish anxiety for our dear ones, even though we may rejoice that they have the pleasures of travel and are able to visit places and people whom they have long desired to see. But there would have been none of this uncertainty about the departure of a member of a sinless race from the earth. No pain would have mingled with the pleasure, no anxiety would have dampened the joy with which farewells would have been waved to the departing voyager. The going from earth would have been a solemn yet a joyful event. Doubtless it would have been regarded as merely a transition to a higher condition of life and wider opportunities for usefulness and enjoyment. There would have been no sickness and no funerals, and instead of wasting away at the approach of the change the body would have been energized by the influx of an immortal life.

When we look at the conditions which would have prevailed if man had remained obedient and compare them with what now rule in the world, we gain a great deal of light regarding the true nature of death. We find that while to a certain extent it is natural, there is much connected with it that is altogether out of harmony with what nature was designed to be. If we dwell too exclusively upon the terrors which gather

*Partly natural,
partly retributive.*

around it, we may be inclined to say with a recent writer that death is "an outrage upon nature" and is a destructive and avenging element in the world.¹ In its present form it must be regarded as having something more than a kindly purpose of nature to fulfill.

Even in its most pronounced form the theory of evolution does not eliminate the moral element from the nature of death. So far as people in civilized lands are concerned, it does not help the matter at all. It is not a ques- From the standpoint of evolution. tion of how responsibility was incurred, but of responsibility itself. Whenever man reaches a point at which he can clearly distinguish right from wrong, he comes under the dominion of the moral law. So far as his accountability is concerned, it makes no difference whether this power was given at the creation of the first man or whether it has been gained by a process of development extending over a vast period of time. The principles of evolution would account for the prevalence of death, and, if it came in a peaceful form, would go far toward reconciling man to the inevitable, but they do not account for the appalling circumstances of suffering and sorrow by which it is attended. A thoughtful mind will find it difficult, if not impossible, to escape the conclusion that in addition to its natural features death has much that is disciplinary and retributive.

Death of the body may be caused by violence or by disease, each of which may assume any one of a great number of forms, or it may occur as the result of old age. But whatever the preliminary stages may be, the final deter- The physiological causes of death. mining cause is to be found in the failure of the heart, the lungs, or the brain. Any prolonged interruption of the circulation, of the respiration, or of the innervating influence of the brain will prove destructive to life.

When the heart is fatally injured by accident or weakened by disease, it becomes unable to force the blood through the body or even to send a sufficient quantity to the brain. The heart. The brain, not receiving the needed impulse from the blood, fails to act. Consequently all the organs that in health receive nervous force from this great centre cease to perform their functions, muscular action is suspended, respiration ceases, and all the powers of the body fail.

¹ Lewis F. Stearns, *Present Day Theology*.

In fatal affections of the lungs death may be due to mechanical or to chemical causes. If by a diseased condition of the organs themselves, or by external means, air is prevented from entering the lungs, the process of purification of the blood, which it is their office to perform, is checked. *The lungs.* The poisonous matter in the blood acts upon and destroys the power of the nervous centres. Consequently the vital fluid can no longer be sent to the heart and death occurs at once. When the cause is chemical rather than mechanical, as in cases of asphyxia from breathing illuminating gas or the fumes of burning charcoal, air reaches the lungs, and is respired, but it does not contain a sufficient quantity of oxygen to purify the blood. There is a gradual change in the color of the blood from red to blue. Insensibility follows, but breathing is continued until the accumulation of poison in the veins and arteries causes the nervous impulse of the brain to cease.

When the brain is the organ primarily affected, either by disease, by accident, or by narcotic poisoning, the citadel is lost because the sentinel falls asleep. *The brain.* The muscles do not receive their accustomed energizing influence from that organ, and are thus rendered incapable of action. This makes respiration impossible, and the heart, receiving neither the proper stimulus nor a sufficient quantity of blood to keep it in action, ceases to beat.

Death from old age is merely the wearing out of the physical system. There is no disease and no accident. Everything is perfectly natural, just as it should be and was designed to be. *Old age.* In such a case the body is like a clock that has ceased to mark the time, not because of any external injury, but simply and only because it is worn out. But such instances are very rare. Even when the period of extreme old age is reached, there is usually something more than the mere failure of the vital powers. Almost invariably there is some derangement, in many cases very slight, of one or more of the vital organs, and this lack of complete adjustment hastens the end. When it appears simply as a failure of the powers, death comes as painlessly and unconsciously as sleep. The general vitality is gradually impaired, sensibility is diminished, and the impulse of the brain is weakened to such an extent that if for merely an instant there is a cessation of either the circula-

tion, respiration, or innervation, the enfeebled powers are not able to resume their action and "the sleep that knows no waking" begins.

Innumerable efforts have been made to find some means by which death could either be prevented or else indefinitely postponed. Dreamers have searched for the fabled fountain of perpetual youth, and scholars have made careful and prolonged investigations in hope of discovering or inventing methods of greatly extending the period of human life. The former have added much to the pathos and the romance of history. The latter have shown that obedience to the laws of health will prevent many deaths in early and middle periods of existence, but they have not been able to prove that what is generally accepted as the natural term of human life can be greatly prolonged. *The postponement of death.*

The fact that during the last two centuries the death rate has been very greatly diminished has led many to suppose that either a greater degree of vitality had been developed or that man had found some means of keeping his destroyer at bay for a longer period than his predecessors were able to do. But a careful examination of the subject seems to show that the improvement which statistics indicate has not been in the nature of a general advance, but has been almost wholly confined to the period between birth and thirty-five years of age. The truth appears to be that our increased knowledge and improved methods enable multitudes of people whose vitality is low, and whose constitutions are weak, to live for twenty or thirty years who under the conditions which prevailed in early times would have died in infancy. With people who have reached middle life the case is different. They have far more comforts than their predecessors enjoyed, and life is now protected at many points that were formerly exposed. But to a great extent these gains are counteracted by our extreme restlessness and the incessant activity required by our modern civilization. *The death rate diminished.*

Numerous students, including some men who were eminent physicians, have formulated rules obedience to which, it was claimed, would give those who did not die by accident a reasonable certainty of reaching old age. *Methods of prolonging life.* Many of these rules were wise and, so far as human wisdom

could discern, were well calculated to secure the purpose desired. Yet, as if to show how powerless man is in the presence of death, some who developed these systems of prolonging earthly existence themselves died in middle life and from ordinary diseases.

Those who have sought to ward off death by the use of natural substances or artificial preparations have met with an equal share of disappointment. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of this kind in recent years was that of Dr. Brown-Séguard. This eminent French physician announced that he had discovered the method of preparing an elixir that would not only enable man to maintain the full vigor of life for an indefinite period, but would also renew the youth of the aged. For a short time his claim seemed to be well founded. Wonderful cases of the restoration of health and strength to people who were advanced in years were reported. But ere long it became evident that the good results obtained by the use of these preparations were only temporary, and in many instances the physical improvement was quickly followed by a serious impairment of the mental powers.

The failure of the efforts of this noted practitioner, and of those of his numerous predecessors, did not check investigation along the lines which they had followed. As in the *Recent investigations.* past, so in the present, men are seeking to prolong the span of life, and some, at least, are not discouraged by the failures which have attended previous efforts. Since work on this book was commenced, an announcement has been made to the effect that Dr. C. A. Stephens, a noted American scientist, who for several years has been making a special study of the causes of death, has expressed the opinion that people do not live nearly as long as they can. They have been educated to believe that threescore and ten years is the practical limit of life. Most of those who live to nearly this age yield to the idea that their days are numbered, and, largely as a result of this belief, do not long survive. They die, not because they actually have come to the end of the term of life upon the earth, but because they imagine that such is the case, and so give up all effort to live. It is reported that Dr. Stephens claims that a great deal of knowledge upon this subject has already been obtained, and that he is "confident that the progress of brain

science will enable mankind successfully to overcome decay and its climax, death."

Theories like the above are interesting, but it does not seem possible that they will prove of any practical benefit. Physiology teaches that disintegrating forces are constantly in operation, which, if life is not arrested by *Physiological laws.* some other cause, will sooner or later destroy the bodily organism. No power can prevent the growth of the seeds of decay and death which the system carries within itself. To some extent accidents, and certain other dangers from outside sources, can be avoided, but the foe that is within the body cannot be expelled.

Like that of any other machine, the term of usefulness of the human system is limited. It is as impossible for the body to make itself new after this limit has been reached as it is for a worn-out engine to put itself into working condition. "The mill cannot grind with the water that has passed." No more can age be infused with the vigor and energy of youth.

Old age is inevitably accompanied by a waning of the bodily powers. To some men the enfeeblement of age comes earlier than it does to others, and the rapidity of the decline varies with different people. But there are no exceptions to the rule that infirmity is inseparably connected with advanced age.

Though some individuals feel the depressing effects of advancing years much more quickly than do others who inherited stronger constitutions, or whose surroundings have been more favorable to health, there is a point at *When the period of old age begins.* which the average man may be said to join the ranks of the aged. Richerand, a famous French physiologist, states that the "climacterical period of sixty-three is the decided and confirmed period of old age." It is true that if no accident occurs, and no serious illness comes, life may be prolonged for many years, but from this delimiting point of old age there will be a gradual but inevitable decline of the physical powers.

After the period of old age is reached, various physiological changes occur. The arteries gradually become hard and unyielding. This in time causes a marked obstruction to the circulation of the blood. The muscles of the *Great changes.* respiratory organs suffer a diminution of strength and elasticity. This still further retards the circulation of the blood, and, what

is perhaps of still more serious import, prevents its thorough purification. The digestion is greatly impaired, and the absorbent vessels become comparatively inactive. As a consequence the system is imperfectly nourished, and there is a serious weakening of the action of the heart. Accompanying these changes, there is a contraction and hardening of the substance of the brain and nervous system, which diminishes the power of innervation. Thus all the forces of the system decline until, if no physical or mental disturbance occurs to hasten the end, the vital energies are exhausted, and the life of the body comes to a close.

Neither power nor skill of man can enable him to maintain his earthly life for more than a very limited period. To the great majority of people this possible extent of life seems far too short. In many ways efforts are made to prolong it. When sickness comes, neither care nor expense is withheld in an effort to avoid a fatal termination. The savings of years are expended in the effort to keep death at bay. That, so far as the final outcome is concerned, the struggle is hopeless, is known to all, but it is the almost universal sentiment of mankind that the day of defeat must be put off as long as possible.

Yet notwithstanding this general love of life and fear of death, and the efforts that are made to prolong the period of the earthly existence, there are great numbers of men who hasten the time of their exit from the world. Vast multitudes do this, indirectly, it is true, but none the less certainly, by a violation of the laws of health. Many are ignorant of hygienic principles, and others are so enslaved by their circumstances and surroundings that they cannot comply with what they know to be the conditions of health. Still others are the victims of care and anxiety which rapidly wear away their vital powers. Those who yield to their appetites and passions surely, and in a far more direct and forcible manner than any of the other classes named, hasten the approach of death. Thus in many ways which are indirect but efficient, men are constantly shortening what should be the natural period of the earthly life.

Then there are many persons, though but few in proportion to the total population, who regard death as less terrible than life and who deliberately and forcibly end their earthly careers.

The number of suicides in the world each year is said to be not less than one hundred and eighty thousand. During the year 1897 six thousand six hundred persons Suicide. in the United States took their own lives. Among this number were many professional people as well as business men and workers in various industrial lines. All parts of the country were represented. The hardships and discouragements of life and dissatisfaction with the prevailing conditions appeared to be as great in the sparsely settled localities as they did in the large cities, and to suggest the same desperate course as the only available means of relief.

There have been men of ability and influence who have sanctioned suicide as a legitimate means of escaping the troubles of life. There are also certain forms of philosophy which, while not giving it their approval, hold that it is not a violation of any moral law. They class it Has not invariably been condemned. as a supremely foolish rather than as a criminal action.

The Buddhist, for example, claims that if duties toward others are not neglected man has a right to take his own life. But he adds the statement that if the thread of life is thus broken it will "be knotted again, and generally under more unfavorable conditions" than those from which the suicide attempts to escape.¹ He also asserts that the consequences of an evil deed cannot be avoided by fleeing from life. Justice is both powerful and eternal, and the wrong-doer cannot possibly escape the punishment which he deserves.

There is also a doctrine, which is held in common by many who upon various related subjects have widely different views, that suicide does not enable man to escape the discipline through which it was designed that he should pass in this world. Miss Lillian Whiting has expressed this idea as follows: "There is a certain fulfillment, — call it human destiny, — what one will, — that every human being must work out for himself. His powers of mind and body and his circumstances together constitute his tools, his means of fulfilling this destiny. This work must be done, some time, somewhere. The future steps in progress cannot be taken until those that lie between are taken." This is something which those who, because they are discouraged by their troubles and Not an efficient remedy for the ills of life.

¹ Subhadra Bhikshu, *A Buddhist Catechism*.

are weary of life, want to "die and get out of it all," should carefully ponder. Suicide cannot free the soul from itself, from its moral obligations, nor from the government of God. It is the worst possible means by which to attempt to secure rest and peace.

In some States the civil law regards suicide as a crime, and, if it is discovered, an unsuccessful attempt to take one's life is severely punished. This law not only has moral

A crime.

grounds for its support, but is also in harmony with the interests of society. It is for the public good, no less than for the benefit of individuals, that this restraint should be imposed upon those who desire to get out of the world before their time.

The Christian religion looks upon suicide as one of the highest of crimes. It is held to be not only a direct violation of the sixth commandment, but also to be wholly

Prohibited by religion.

opposed to the letter and the spirit of the New Testament writings, which place great emphasis on the sacredness of human life and upon the duty which every man owes to his fellow creatures.

While the plea is often made in behalf of those who take their own lives that poverty, disappointment, disgrace, or illness which no medical skill can cure are "extenuating circumstances," it does not seem possible to justify this desperate effort to obtain relief. The man who, while in the full possession of his reason, destroys his life must be considered guilty of a great sin. His duty to God requires him to stay in the world until he is removed therefrom by natural causes.

Then, too, the claims of relatives and friends, and even of casual acquaintances cannot be rightfully ignored. No man can entirely separate his own interests from the interests of those around him. The Apostle Paul affirms that "none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." The effects of the life and of the death of even the humblest individual reach far beyond the field of his own limited observation, and may have a much more powerful and enduring influence than he ever dreamed.

There is also an element of cowardice in suicide. To rush away from the world in hope of escaping his own troubles and, by that very means, leave a heritage of sorrow and shame to

his family, is very far from being an act of courage. The man who has the clear moral light of the present day, and yet throws away the gift of life and the opportunities for usefulness which to some extent are given to even the most humble and the most unfortunate, seems to merit the description of Socrates, who pronounced the suicide a deserter from society.

Not courageous.

It is true that there is an appalling amount of misery in the world. Into most lives that are prolonged to the period of middle age there comes much of sorrow and disappointment. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness."

The troubles of life.

There is no escape from trouble, and some lives seem to be an almost unbroken line of disasters. It is not strange that the load seems heavy and that sometimes even the stoutest heart should quail. Even the majestic Prophet Elijah, whose heroism and fortitude have hardly been surpassed in the history of the world, once fled into the wilderness and desired to die. But his faith soon revived, and he went forth to do valiant service for God. So every man in the hours of darkness and disaster should find comfort in the thought that all things are under the control of One who is wise and beneficent, and that the ills of the present may be made the means of great good in the future. Instead of wishing to desert the field, let him say as did the Patriarch Job, when undergoing the most terrible and inexplicable trials, —

"All the days of my warfare would I wait,
Till my release should come."

In the vast majority of cases in which death appears to have occurred there is no reason to doubt that the vital action of the body has permanently ceased. The evidence is too direct and convincing to be questioned. The ordinary appearance of the body after death is too well known to need description. The circumstances which attend the closing moments of life are so marked, and the change which comes over the body is so great, that no one who possesses and uses the ordinary powers of observation will be deceived.

Apparent death.

Yet it should be universally known that there are exceptions to this rule. Numerous cases are on record in which persons who were supposed to be dead have revived, and some have recovered their health and lived for many years. What seemed to the observers to be death was really

Suspended animation.

suspended animation. In some instances only the body was affected in this strange manner. The mind was clear during all the period of bodily insensibility; and though all control of the muscular system was lost, the sense of hearing was not impaired, and the person who was regarded by others as dead fully understood the conversation of the attendants, and was well informed as to the plans for his funeral and burial.

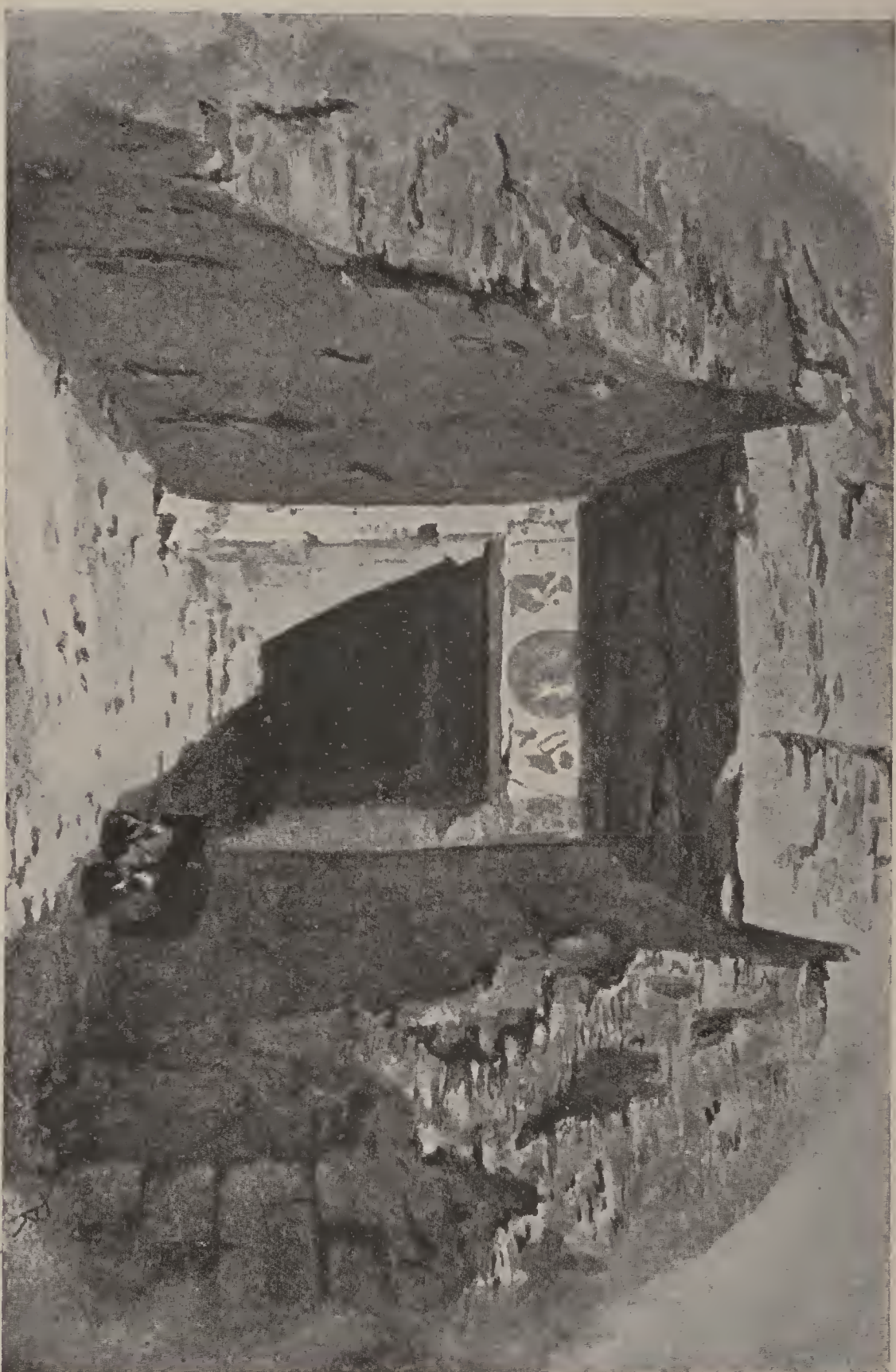
There is no doubt that in some instances of suspended animation death has resulted from packing the body in ice, embalming, or premature burial. These cases have not been as common in quite recent times as they were at an earlier period, and it is probable that the number has always been greatly exaggerated. Among people as intelligent as are those who live in civilized lands at the present day such "accidents" are not likely to occur. But when the terrible results of a mistake of this kind are considered, the necessity of using the most efficient means to prevent its occurrence becomes apparent.

One of the features of a great international exposition which is soon to be held in Italy is an elaborate investigation, by members of the medical department, of the subject of *A public inquiry.* "Apparent Death and Premature Burial." It is said that an effort will be made to cause the enactment of laws regarding the length of time that a body which is supposed to be dead shall be kept before burial is permitted. While well-informed people will neither require nor approve such restrictions, there may be localities in which legal safeguards against premature burial are necessary.

There are certain forms of disease in which the ordinary appearances of death are not as conclusive as they are in others.

Precautions to be taken. The body may seem to be dead, and yet a spark of life may remain. In some cases, also, of what seem to be sudden death there may remain a feeble current of life. Wherever there is the slightest reason to hope that the vital forces are not entirely destroyed, the most careful tests should be made before the body is buried, or is so treated by the undertaker as to destroy any possibility of resuscitation which may exist.

In all doubtful cases a physician should be consulted. This to determine the facts and also to make proper efforts to secure reanimation if the case does not appear to be entirely hopeless.



THE TOMB OF MENEPTAH.

Among the methods of determining whether death has really occurred, that of hypodermic injections of ammonia is often adopted. It is claimed by some that this treatment will have no perceptible effect upon a dead body, but will cause a red blush upon the skin if life is not entirely extinct. A later method is the injection, into the tissues of the body, of fluorescein. The efficiency of the method last named is said to be due to the fact that wherever life remains there will be a circulation of the blood. In cases of suspended animation or of extreme exhaustion, the movement may be too feeble to be detected by any ordinary methods, but will surely be revealed by the application of this test. If there is no life the substance will remain at the precise point at which it was injected. But the slightest degree of circulation will cause a sufficient diffusion of the bright-colored material to show that the motion of the vital fluid has not entirely ceased.

When these or similar tests cannot be made, and there is the slightest reason for supposing that death is apparent rather than real, the body should be kept until life returns or the operations of nature show that life has departed. When the skin of the abdomen takes on a green tint, and there is a slight separation of the cuticle from the tissues underneath, there can be no doubt that life is extinct.

If suitable precautions are taken there will be no possibility of premature burial. Most of the reported cases of such burials in recent times have doubtless had their source in *Premature burials infrequent.* superstitious fear, in a disordered imagination caused by overwrought nerves, in a want of knowledge regarding the possible movement of the body after death has occurred, or in a desire on the part of the narrator to furnish something startling to his hearers or readers. The formation of gases in the dead body will sometimes cause it to change its position after burial. The reports of such instances have led to the fear that the persons supposed to have been dead became conscious after they were placed in the grave. Such evidence has but little weight with those who have investigated the subject, and who are the best qualified to judge. If reasonable precautions were taken there need be no fear, in any case of this kind, that the burial was premature.

Allusion has been made to the fact that the world is too small

to furnish a permanent home for mankind. If death or some
Death necessary equivalent thereto had not intervened, the number
to progress. of people which the earth could sustain would have
 been reached in a comparatively short time. Then all progress
 would have ceased and achievement would have been at an end.
 Everywhere there would have been stagnation and decay.

Under present conditions growth and development are active
 and potent factors in the condition of the race. One genera-
 tion utilizes the inventions, the discoveries, and to a great extent
 the experience of those by which it has been preceded. Each
 contributes to the common fund for the benefit of posterity.
 Thus humanity is constantly rising to a higher plane and at-
 taining a more complete control of its rapidly unfolding powers.
 The conservatism natural to and perhaps inseparable from age
 acts as a constant and beneficent check to the excessive confi-
 dence of youth, while the mingled energy and caution of those
 in middle life tends to harmonize the efforts of all. Thus along
 all lines of effort progress is being made, and this progress is
 promoted by death. But for death all the people in the world
 would soon be old. Age would bring wisdom, it is true, but it
 would incapacitate men for the planning and the execution of
 great enterprises which younger and more vigorous men could
 prosecute with success. The passing away of the individual is
 for the benefit of the race.

This principle holds true throughout the world. Everywhere
 it is death that opens the way for progress. It is death that
 gives the opportunity for new and more abundant life. Plants
 feed upon elements which were once parts of other vegetation.
 These plants may be utilized by animals which, in their turn,
 are sacrificed to sustain the lives of men. All living things
 draw part of their sustenance from something that has previ-
 ously lived and perished. "There is nothing grows except a
 death occurs."

Death presents itself in many aspects and awakens various
 and conflicting emotions in the human mind. With much that
A boundless is terrible it combines not a little that is kindly. It
empire. is sublime in its might and magnificent in its domain.
 It is absolutely inexorable. Its prey can by no possibility elude
 pursuit or escape with life. Its empire is universal. No lofty
 peak, no secluded valley, no mountain cave, no desert waste, can

offer a hiding-place from death. Wherever he goes, whatever he does, man is always followed by the great archer who never misses his mark. There is no other reign so despotic. There is no other empire so boundless. No exaggeration, no poetic license, nothing but the hard and solemn truth, is to be found in the splendid tribute to death from which the following extracts are taken: —

“ Spirit with the drooping wing
And the ever-weeping eye,
Thou of all earth’s kings art king;
Empires at thy footstool lie.

.
“ What’s the grandeur of the earth
To the grandeur round thy throne?
Riches, glory, beauty, birth,
To thy kingdom all have gone.

.
“ Earth has hosts, but thou canst show
Many a million for her one;
Through thy gates the mortal flow
Hath for countless years rolled on.”¹

Whatever may be his attitude toward earthly governments, and human rulers who claim obedience to their laws, each man must own his allegiance to death. Every day some ninety thousand human beings fall beneath its stroke. There is no escape in the present. The future offers no hope. Death will maintain its empire until the closing day in the history of the world.

¹ George Croly, *The Empire of Death*.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE ARTICLE OF DEATH

MAN reaches the supreme moment of his earthly career in the article of death. No other moment is invested with such awful solemnity as is that in which he departs from the world. In no other moment is the soul so thronged with emotions. Probably there is no other time in which it is so prophetic and so expectant.

A solemn moment.

Doubtless the full significance of what is taking place in the article of death is far beyond the comprehension of the finite mind. But both the dying and those who are gathered around him realize that a tremendous crisis is at hand. From the earthly vision of the departing one the sunlight fades forever, and the cloud which has followed him from the moment of his birth envelops him as a shroud. His little bark is just floating out on the vast ocean of eternity. For him the clock of life marks its last moment of time. All that pertains to the present world passes away, and upon the earthly side of the great drama of life the curtain for the last time falls.

In the article of death man comes into the actual and immediate presence of the profound mystery which has faced him all his life, and which every passing moment has been bringing nearer to his experience. The boundary line of all that pertains to the things of time has been reached. The soul realizes, as never before, that

*A profound
mystery.*

“ There is a stream, whose narrow tide
The known and unknown worlds divide,
Where all must go.”

The bank of this stream has been reached. Upon the one side there is knowledge and experience. Upon the other there is mystery and uncertainty.

It is true that during all of his life man has been surrounded by the mysterious and the unknown. He has been baffled at

numberless points at which he has attempted to supplant ignorance with knowledge. But with all this lack of information regarding so many matters of interest there has been a great deal that was clearly comprehended and concerning which his confidence was unshaken. He had sufficient knowledge to enable him to carry on the work of life and to obtain no small amount of enjoyment. The doubts by which he has been disturbed, and the mysteries by which he has been perplexed, have not been of such a nature as to affect seriously the interests of his earthly existence.

In the article of death all this is changed. The man is going away from what is known. The old landmarks disappear. Instead of remaining an outer region, lying upon the border of the world in which he has lived and moved, the mysterious realm is a present reality. He is leaving the familiar scenes of earth and entering the mysterious realm of the beyond. He is passing "into that which is within the veil."

As our friends go through this final experience of earth, we look with longing eyes in hope that we may catch a glimpse of the land that lies beyond, but we always look in vain. Not till we stand upon the dividing line, not till we come to the article of death, will our vision be sufficiently keen to disclose to us aught of the mystery which with its now impenetrable folds covers the border land of death.

Perhaps more appalling than the solemnity or the mystery which gathers around the closing of an earthly career is the complete isolation of the dying one from all that *The solitude of death.* pertains to earth. Friends who would willingly lay down their lives for his sake may stand around his bed, and do all that human love and human strength can do, but in this great moment of destiny their aid cannot avail. As far as all that is human is concerned, he must "tread the winepress alone."

Woe to the man who comes to this last moment of his earthly life with no vital faith concerning the things which lie beyond! The consolations of religion are too often regarded with indifference in the days of health, but in the article of death they are as a strong anchor to a ship in a mighty sea. They cheer and sustain in the otherwise lonely conflict. Unless he has a guard from the invisible world, the departing one is as solitary in death as though he were the only being in the universe.

So far as earthly hopes and plans are concerned, the article of death is the moment of doom. Up to this point in the progress of a dangerous disease there is a possibility, very faint in many cases, but still admitting hope, that the execution of the sentence which apparently has been issued may be delayed. Medical aid may prolong the life for a little period. Nature, which sometimes shows a wonderful degree of tenacity, may make another rally against the foe. But in the article of death the last hope is blotted out. The forces which have been fighting for a continuance of life make an unconditional surrender. The flag is hauled down. The conqueror takes full possession. As far as the physical man is concerned, the ruin is complete.

*The ruin of
earthly plans.*

In the article of death all ranks are leveled, all earthly distinctions are effaced. The ruler is as helpless as is his weakest subject. The defeat of the master is as complete as is that of the servant. The wise and the ignorant surrender upon the same terms. Well do the Orientals say that when the body has turned to ashes in the earth no difference can be distinguished between

*All distinctions
obliterated.*

“The richest sultan and the poorest slave.”

The man who has cherished the feeling that on account of his birth, education, wealth, or any other real or supposed advantage, he was superior to the ordinary type of humanity, finds that death has no respect for matters of this description. All classes, all conditions, are brought to a common level in the final moment of the earthly life.

In the article of death man is separated from friends and home. He is leaving those who are dear unto him and to whom he is dear. All earthly ties are sundered. The home life ceases, the home itself is left behind. “I cling to my home,” said one who was unspeakably dear to me, as he was going into the valley. Day and night those words pass through my mind. Inexpressibly sad they are, but they voice the common sentiment of mankind.

A long farewell.

To thoughtful people there is always something of sadness connected with the leaving of home. Even where a great deal of pleasure is expected, and a return at a period not far distant is looked forward to, there is always a certain feeling of regret. The shadow may be slight, but it is sure to fall. Even the hum-

blest home has its attractions, and regret that it must be left forever is a universal sentiment in the article of death.

The last point in the earthly life must be a supremely expectant moment. As a traveler who has been long shut within a narrow valley nears the summit of a mountain peak, *An expectant moment.* wonders what scenes will open to his vision as he reaches the top, so the mind of one who is almost to the line at which the hitherto unknown world is to come into view must be in a solemnly expectant attitude. There will be an eager desire to know what is to be the outcome of this great experience through which he is passing.

No man can be indifferent regarding what awaits him as he crosses the threshold of death. And knowing, as all men do, that this supreme moment must come, it is strange that no more thought is given to a consideration of the probabilities of the conditions which will prevail when the earthly life comes to a close. It is, indeed, remarkable that while in health and strength men do not have more curiosity, using this word in its highest sense, in respect to what awaits them in the article of death. The solemn inquiry which will surely be made should not be neglected until the instant of departure from the world.

One able writer¹ upon the being and destiny of man, who several years ago passed beyond the bounds of earth, brought out this idea very forcibly by suggesting that if all the people in the world were notified that another planet had been prepared for them, and that within a certain specified period they must all depart from their earthly abodes, there would at first be a feeling of the greatest consternation. But when once "the mighty emigrating column was formed and put in motion, fear would give way in part to curiosity," and people would eagerly ask each other's opinion regarding the situation of the new world and how it compared in appearance and comfort with the one upon which they had thus far had their home. While no order of this kind is to be issued, and the future abode of man is not supposed to be another planet, it is true that at some moment, to him unknown, each individual must leave this world and enter some place or state concerning the location and conditions of which he is almost entirely ignorant. From such an ordeal there is a natural shrinking of the soul. Yet it is prob-

¹ Dr. J. R. Nichols, *Whence, What, Where?*

ably true that "the feeling of fear which pervades the mind in contemplating the great change often becomes subordinate to curiosity," and many questions arise as to what the immediate future has in store for him who is on the border line of the vast unknown.

At the near approach of "the terminal act of life" there is a great change in the appearance and condition of the body, and this change progresses until the end of the earthly existence is reached. The action of the heart becomes so feeble that the blood cannot be forced to the extremities and the hands and feet grow cold. The powers of perception rapidly wane. The sight fails, the organs of taste and smell cease to act, the power of hearing is lost, and, last of all, the sense of touch is destroyed. Life may depart with a sigh, a groan, or a gasp; or the dying one may appear to be merely falling asleep. Not infrequently there are convulsive movements, which to the minds of the beholders indicate great suffering.

Science has proved beyond all question that the appearances of physical pain in the article of death are entirely misleading.

The agony of death. The muscular movements are automatic, and the sensibility of the brain has become too greatly impaired to receive impressions of any kind. Consequently no pain can be experienced.

When death approaches gradually the quantity of oxygen supplied to the lungs is steadily diminished. This renders them less and less efficient in their efforts to purify the blood, which consequently becomes heavily charged with carbon dioxide. While this is a virulent poison, it also acts as a powerful anæsthetic. Painful as they seem to be, the physiologist finds in the convulsive struggles which sometimes accompany dissolution "conclusive proof that the dying man is already narcotized beyond pain."¹ It is comforting to know that the often used term, "the agony of death," has reference to an apparent and not to a real condition. However great the previous suffering may have been, it passes away before the final stage of life is reached. There is abundant evidence that, so far as the physical nature is concerned, passing through the gate of death is as painless as falling asleep.

¹ M. P. Hatfield, M. D., *Physiology and Hygiene*.

In cases of sudden death by accident or violence, there is an entire absence of pain. The shock to the system is so great that death occurs before sensation has time to recover its action. The man who dies in this manner leaves the world without the slightest idea of the cause which has closed his earthly career.

Great as is the interest which we feel in the physical nature, it is not with the body alone, or chiefly, that we are concerned in the hour and the article of death. We have seen *The mental state at death.* how the bodily powers decline and life departs from the physical frame. We have traced the course of the decay of the tabernacle in which for a time he has dwelt, but this, it is firmly believed, was not the man. Although intimately associated with him, a vital part of him, the part of his being through which he gained knowledge for his own purposes and made himself known to others, its capacities were small and its powers were feeble when compared with those of the intellectual and spiritual nature by which it was tenanted. It is important to consider the man himself as he comes to that critical moment in which his personality is either extinguished or else enters into the region of the tremendous realities which lie beyond the range of earthly vision.

One of the common effects of disease of the body is an apparent impairment of the intellectual powers. There are many exceptions, but this is the rule. The mind is so intimately connected with the body that any serious disturbance of the latter tends to weaken the action of the former. This is perfectly natural. It does not prove that the power of the mind has been diminished, but it does show that the means of communication which the intellect uses have been weakened or otherwise injured. During the progress of a lingering disease, or of a brief but violent illness, there is often a marked depression of the mental powers. The same effect is ordinarily produced by old age. The inevitable decline of the physical forces is naturally accompanied by a gradual failure of the intellectual faculties.

It is not certain, however, that this subjection of the intellect to the enfeebled bodily condition continues through the final moment of the earthly life. Some very careful students and close observers of the phenomena of death *A revival of the intellectual powers.* believe that in very many cases, perhaps in all, there comes a flash of the clearest mental perception and a great

exaltation of the intellectual faculties at the instant in which the soul takes its flight. That restoration of the mental powers in this critical moment has occurred in cases of serious and long-standing diseases of the brain is unquestionably true. This makes it reasonable to suppose that where the mind has not been diseased it will assert its power. And though there is often the appearance of a profound stupor, it does not follow that the dying one is unconscious in the moment of departure. The probabilities are against such a supposition.

People who have been revived from apparent death by drowning have said that as they seemed to be leaving the world there passed through their minds a history of their entire lives. Incidents of which they had not thought for years were vividly presented, and the whole panorama of their thoughts and deeds was unrolled. The same quickened mental activity has been noticed by men who were suddenly exposed to great danger and who were in momentary expectation of death. And it does not seem improbable that when the physical powers are finally giving way, the mind, no longer distracted by the senses, exerts itself with a degree of clearness and power which it never before had exhibited.

Of infinitely greater importance than the state of the body or the mind is the spiritual condition in the article of death. The question whether this moment is one of absolute finality as regards the decision of all moral problems will be considered in a later chapter. Though many believe to the contrary, it seems to me that no radical change of character will take place after the departure of the soul from this world. I find no clear assurance in the Word of God that such a change is possible. With all my heart and soul I wish it could be made. But I have no right to interpret the Scriptures in accordance with my personal desires if their general teaching seems to point in another direction. Whether or not it is forever decisive, I am sure that the attitude of the soul, as it comes to the dividing line between this present world and the world that lies beyond, is a matter of transcendent importance.

It is held by some that in this supreme moment the soul continues in the state in which it has been willing to exist in the past. Whatever it is as it approaches the line, that it remains while the line is being crossed. In support of this claim they

*The spiritual
state at death.*

point to many instances in which men have exhibited "the ruling passion strong in death." The miser has talked about his wealth as long as he could express ^{*Change of attitude.*} his ideas, the mind of the scholar has been engaged with thoughts of his favorite studies, and the man who has been planning great things for the future still keeps them in mind. In such cases it seems as if the man was passing into the unseen realm with just the same tastes and desires as the ones which were active while he was in health. Then, too, there are numerous instances in which the mind is disordered and, so far as the last audible expressions can enable us to judge, the mental processes are so confused that the dying one is incompetent to change any decisions which he has made at a previous time. Not infrequently the last words of people are very different from what their lives and characters would lead their friends to expect. In such cases the disturbance of the mental system caused by the breaking down of the physical nature is so great that the real man is not able to make himself known to those around him.

It must be admitted that these evidences go far toward proving that no moral change can come to man in the article of death. There seems to be ample ground for the belief that one who has intelligently, deliberately, and persistently chosen evil instead of good, who has turned the energies of his nature into vicious courses, and who has made an absolute and unqualified decision to follow evil through time and eternity, may pass through the great ordeal of death without the slightest effort, or even the faintest desire, to turn from his wicked ways. But it seems possible that men who have not recklessly and outrageously trampled upon all that is good will have a great spiritual awakening in the article of death. This may occur even in cases in which the mind is disordered up to the point at which the power of communication with others entirely fails.

After the earthly sight has failed, the power of speech has gone, and no movement of the body can be made, — just as the soul takes its flight, — the spiritual nature may become more sensitive, and its powers may be far ^{*Perhaps a great uplift.*} greater than has ever been the case in its previous experience. Perhaps in this supreme moment "the mists of the earthly life clear away and its delusions disappear." The change from the

ordinary mental and spiritual condition may be as marked as the one which we now observe when a man steps from a dark cave into the full light of the noonday sun. With this light flashing from the hitherto unseen world there may be presented to the soul an opportunity to affirm or reverse the choices which it has made in the past.

This view should not, in the slightest degree, encourage one to leave the determination of the great moral questions of life until the moment of death. It is not certain that an opportunity to decide them will then be afforded. Neither is there any warrant for supposing that if it were given, it would invariably be followed by a decision for the right. By the great majority of those who have had a clear knowledge of the truth, and who in defiance of great light and greater love have chosen the evil, and have persistently followed it, such an opportunity would probably be disregarded. To those who had never heard of Christ it might open a way of light and life. And perhaps the hope may be cherished that many of the laggards in the work of preparation for the future which awaits them, together with the discouraged and the weak-willed ones who have known their duty, but have never summoned sufficient resolution to do it, will rise to nobler heights than they have yet attained, and in the moment of departure from earth become the subjects of a signal act of grace on the part of a just but merciful God.

To many persons who reach the border of the unknown land with minds unclouded, or whose mental powers, after a period of depression, reassert themselves in the article of death, there come visions of persons or scenes which are wholly invisible to all others. In many cases relatives and friends who have previously died are apparently beheld by the departing soul. Sometimes the heavens seem to be opened, and the face of the dying one is lighted up with a glory that is not of earth. Sad cases, too, are on record — cases in which a life that had been spent in wickedness has gone out amid scenes of darkness and despair.

It has been generally supposed that these visions were of a supernatural nature. That they were seen only by the dying was thought to be due to the fact that in the article of death there is a great exaltation of the spiritual perceptions which clearly reveal things which cannot be apprehended by the physi-

*Visions of the
dying.*

cal senses. This, to the great majority of people, was an entirely satisfactory explanation.

In recent years the truth of this view has been questioned by some who maintain that all the strange phenomena can be fully accounted for upon purely natural grounds. It has been affirmed that people under the influence of anæsthetics have had similar visions, and that they proceeded entirely from a disordered condition of the mental faculties. The dying person may be under the influence of a powerful anæsthetic produced by a failure of the lungs to purify the blood. This, it is claimed, would have the same effect as would the administration of chloroform or any similar agent. Therefore the advocates of the theory insist that the supposed visions should be regarded merely as the dreams of a disordered and unrestrained mind.

It is not to be denied that under certain conditions powerful anæsthetics will awaken pleasurable emotions. This I can affirm as a matter of personal experience as well as of observation. But there are a great number of instances in which glorious visions have appeared to dying saints, and some in which terrible scenes were unfolded to hardened criminals, in their last moments on earth, for which such an explanation does not appear to be sufficient. There are indications that they had their origin in something higher than a mere physical condition, and that they have a more profound meaning than could be drawn from such a cause. It is surely reasonable to suppose that in the article of death there is a great uplift of the mind and the soul, and that the prime cause of this exaltation of the higher faculties lies in the spiritual domain.

CHAPTER V

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF DEATH

REGARDING many things pertaining to death all who give the subject intelligent thought are fully agreed. But there are other points upon which widely different views have prevailed in the past, and concerning which equally diverse opinions are entertained by men of the present day. It is not at all strange that there should be such differences of belief. There is no other subject upon which, in all of its details, men think exactly alike. Therefore it is not to be expected that there will be entire agreement in their views concerning death.

One of the reasons for these divergent views is to be found in the extremely different conditions under which men live. To one man life is pleasant and desirable. He recoils from the idea that he must surrender it, and with it the comforts which it brings him, and which seem to be indispensable to his happiness. But to another man life is an almost unbroken round of troubles and disappointments. He suffers from disease, or has domestic trouble, or his plans are thwarted, and his purposes fail of accomplishment. The world yields him very little that he strives to gain. The path of life is hard, and the rewards of toil are few. So he becomes wearied and discouraged. Life has been so hard and disappointing that he can think of its close with composure, if not with positive satisfaction. It is perfectly natural that these varying conditions under which men live should cause a very marked difference of opinion as to the way in which the close of life is regarded.

Another reason, and one that exerts more influence than all others combined, why men do not agree in their views of death, is to be found in the fact that they hold widely different opinions as to what actually results from this great change. It is plain that what any given individual thinks of death must depend upon his mental conception of the nature of that event and of the effects which it will produce. What a

*Judged by its
supposed results.*

Various opinions.

man thinks of death will not in the slightest degree modify the facts in the case, but it will make a great difference in the manner in which death will be regarded.

In early times, when the field of knowledge was small, and revelation concerning the future of humanity was both meagre and obscure, men represented death according to many different fancies. To the ancient Hebrews it was a messenger of destruction. To them life was warm, and cheerful, and desirable. It was the great good. Death was dark and forbidding. In mythology death has been represented as "the daughter of night and the sister of sleep." By some of the ancients it was regarded as an infernal deity. But it was a deity before whom no priests ministered, and in whose honor no temple services were held. Realizing that it was absolutely inexorable no effort was made to win its favor, or obtain help from its intervention. The old Norsemen spoke of death as a "home going," and the American Indian regarded it as a call to "happy hunting grounds."

In art death has been variously represented. Sometimes it appears as a sleeping child. At others it is shown as a beautiful youth, and it is often depicted in friendly attitudes. But it has more frequently been figured as an enemy. One of the common representations is that of a skeleton armed with a scythe. Others show a terrible figure with an uplifted dart, and a wasted form holding an hourglass through which the sands of life are passing.

In literature death has been described in many ways. Sometimes it is represented as man's truest and kindest friend; more frequently, perhaps, as a malignant and relentless foe. Some of these descriptions have been appalling; others are properly classed as sublime.

As has already been indicated, the idea which any given individual will have of death will depend very largely upon the point of view from which it is regarded. The character of the man, his tastes and desires, his hopes and his ambitions, will all give a coloring to his opinions upon this subject. Death cannot be regarded as a problem in mathematics, or a fact in science, or like anything else which appeals solely to the intellect and presents the same outlines to all observers. For, in the consideration of death we have to do with a matter

of direct and intense individual interest. It is impossible to eliminate the personal equation.

Not only is this true, but it is also a fact that the same individual may have very different views of death at some times from those which he entertains at others. What seems at one time to be a perfectly natural event, which should be accepted as a matter of course, may appear very terrible under other conditions. In certain moods death may be thought of with apprehension, in others it may present a really friendly aspect, and there may be times in which the thought of its certainty, and of its possible proximity, will awaken no particular emotion. The physical, mental, and moral condition will each and all exert a modifying influence upon the opinion which is held upon this subject, and as these conditions vary the ideas regarding death may be correspondingly modified. This fact should not give alarm to one who is trying to live in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel. He may not at all times feel ready and willing to die, but this may be due to causes which do not in the least affect the question of his preparation for death. Character, not feeling, will be the standard by which this all-important matter will be determined.

Probably there is no other form in which death so often appears to the mind of man as in that of an enemy. Disappointments and misfortunes may embitter him against life, yet they seldom bring him to a point at which he can accept death as a friend. Until the ordinary means of enjoyment have been destroyed by illness or age, it is natural for man to look upon death as a foe. And cases are very common in which the poor and the suffering, and even the helpless, who have no hope of securing the slightest improvement of their condition in this world, eagerly desire to live. It is entirely natural that men who are well supplied with the comforts of life should desire to remain in possession of their means of enjoyment, but the fact that the great majority of those who find life a hard and an incessant struggle are equally reluctant to depart shows that deep down in the nature of man there is a strong feeling that death is an evil of appalling magnitude. Reason assures us that death is a necessity, and that in some respects it is kind, but this conclusion does not come spontaneously. It must be reached by means of careful intellectual processes.

Death an enemy.



THE TOMB OF RACHEL.

The intuitive view of man is that death is an ever-threatening and a most malignant enemy.

Together with, and largely proceeding from, this idea of enmity, is a very general fear of death. This emotion of fear has been common, though not universal, in all ages and among all people. It is much more pronounced *The fear of death.* in some countries than it is in others, and it varies greatly with individuals belonging to the same race and even to the same family. It is due to various causes. In part it is instinctive. In many minds there is a natural recoil from death. It is, also, to a considerable extent a matter of education. But the most potent of all influences which invest death with dread is found in the moral nature of man which is apprehensive regarding the consequences of the imperfections which have marked the conduct of life.

This fear of death is far from constant. To many it comes only at long intervals. It is comparatively slight in childhood. In youth it sometimes comes as a gloomy cloud, but *The emotion not constant.* there is always a hope, and usually an expectation, that death will be long delayed. In middle life the cares or pleasures of the world largely engross the attention, but the thought of death will sometimes intrude. To those who are living only for this world, whose thoughts seldom rise to a higher life and all of whose possessions are here below, the hour of departure from familiar scenes, when considered at all, must be regarded with deep anxiety. It is said that when the famous actor, Garrick, was taking Dr. Samuel Johnson through his fine house, and exhibiting its beautiful furnishings, the great moralist exclaimed, "Ah, David, these are the things that make death terrible!" The man who sets his heart upon this world, and centres all his hopes in earthly things, must always find the thought of death intensely painful. Yet even in cases of this kind the emotion is not often awakened. Most of the time other matters engage the attention, and, as far as possible, the closing scene is excluded from the mind. With the approach of age the idea of departure must come frequently to the mind, but the fear with which the great change was regarded in earlier years seems to decrease. This may be due in part to the fact that the infirmities of age have deprived life of much of its enjoyment, but it probably comes in a large measure as the result of

a beneficent law of our being in obedience to which the mind gradually becomes resigned to what is clearly seen to be inevitable.

Although the fear of death is not a constant emotion it is very real, and to many people it brings a great amount of unhappiness. For this reason it will be well to consider, rather more fully than has yet been done, some of the causes of the apprehension with which the thought of death is so frequently accompanied. It should be known whether this fear rests upon rational grounds, or comes from an erroneous view of the purposes and the effects of the destroyer of life.

To a very large extent the fear of death grows out of a feeling of uncertainty regarding what is to follow after it has done its work. And, in turn, this uncertainty will be largely determined by the religious belief, or want of belief, of the individual by whom it is entertained.

The man who has no living faith in God, and no firm belief in a revelation from Him, must find in the uncertainty which hangs over death and what comes after it ample reason for any degree of fear to which he may be subject. To such an one death is an appalling enigma. For the future it offers no certainties, but it opens a field of possibilities of evil which no human intellect can grasp. It means either the absolute destruction of the being or else the continuation of existence under conditions which may involve regret and suffering through endless ages. Under such conditions death may well be described, in the words of a noted unbeliever, as "a terrible leap in the dark."

Probably the most common cause of the fear of death is a sense of guilt. Whatever may be his views as to the full desert of sin, every man will acknowledge the fact of its existence and admit that it cannot properly be allowed to go entirely unpunished. It is true that all men are not sinners in an equal degree. Some have come into the world with strong tendencies toward evil and have had but little light regarding their duty to God and to their fellow men. But after all possible excuses are admitted, and all abatements due on account of heredity and environment have been made, there will still remain many failures to perform known duty, and numerous

transgressions of the right, for which it is impossible to escape responsibility. As would naturally be expected, the sense of accountability is much keener in some cases than it is in others, but to every one who is sufficiently intelligent to discern the evil from the good there are times in which the thought of wrongdoing increases the purely natural fear of death. "The sting of death is sin," and until sin has been pardoned, or the soul has become so hardened in guilt as to no longer perceive its enormity, the fear that grows out of it cannot be wholly and permanently removed.

There are many people whose fear of death is either caused or greatly increased by their ignorance of the circumstances by which the event will be attended. Certain forms of death seem much more terrible than others, and are on that account particularly dreaded. The petition, in the Book of Common Prayer, to be delivered from sudden death, indicates that by a very large number of people a removal from earth without warning is considered a great evil. This petition is significant, not merely on account of the desire which it expresses, but because of the character of those by whom it is principally employed. It is not usually offered by men and women who, so far as human judgment can determine, are in the greatest need of time in which to prepare for their departure; but by people who are at least trying to live godly lives.

*Ignorance of
attendant
circumstances.*

It is possible, as some have suggested, that when the litany was prepared this petition was framed with special reference to death by violence, at the hands of others, rather than to a merely unexpected summons to leave the world. But, whatever the original intent may have been, the phrase is still retained, and the connection in which it appears seems to justify the inference that those who use it feel that sudden death from any cause is to be deplored. Still, this sentiment is not universal. There are people who, if allowed to choose the manner of their exit from the world, would prefer to die suddenly.

Neither is opinion uniform regarding other phases of this subject. There are people to whom some particular malady seems invested with unspeakable horror, while to their friends and associates it does not appear more dreadful than any one of many other forms of disease. Doubtless much of the slavish fear of death which is sometimes manifested is due to an appre-

hension that the great enemy will appear in a form which seems most cruel and forbidding. There are many people who would look forward to the time, and regard the fact, of their departure from this world with much greater composure than they now do, if they were assured that the special form of disease or accident of which they are in the greatest dread would not be the means of their removal.

Yet, while it is certain that in some forms death is more to be dreaded than it is in others, and that it would be a great relief to know that an easy departure would be granted, it cannot be denied that ignorance as to the specific character which it will assume is a great blessing to man. Knowledge upon this point would increase rather than diminish the dread with which the final scene is surrounded. It is best, both for ourselves and for all with whom we have to do, that in respect to the manner of our departure the veil should not be lifted until we come into the immediate presence of death.

There is also a fear of death that is purely instinctive. This form of fear is manifested by the lower animals as fully as it is by man, and seems to be common to all sentient beings. Under its influence the weak quickly flee from the strong. The strong resist attack and use all possible means to preserve their own lives, and, in order to insure safety in the future, destroy the lives of their assailants. Self-preservation is said to be "the first law" of human nature, and observation shows it to be the law that dominates all the brute creation.

Some of the causes which lead men to fear death are not worthy of the degree of importance which in many cases is attached to them. They are not to be ignored, but they should have a subordinate place. There are others which cannot be too carefully considered. They all have their uses, and the lessons which they are designed to teach should be learned and applied.

The circumstances which are to attend our exit from the world should not be allowed to make us unduly apprehensive. They may well be left to the care and direction of God. Whatever He chooses should be accepted without complaint. We are His children. He cares for us, and He knows, infinitely better than we can even imagine, what is for our best good.

The fear of death which springs from a feeling that all may

not be well with us hereafter is an emotion of solemn import which cannot, even for an instant, be safely disregarded. It should lead to an immediate surrender of the soul to the will of God, and a change in the heart and life which will bring the whole being into such relations with its Creator as to take away the sting, though it may not wholly remove the natural dread, of death.

Neither is the instinctive fear of death to be lightly regarded. It was implanted in the nature of man for wise and beneficent purposes. There are multitudes of people who find the conditions of life hard and disagreeable, and who rebel against the discipline to which they are subjected for their moral improvement. Many a man who belongs to this class would, in some time of special stress and discouragement, commit suicide, —

“ But that the dread of something after death,
That undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveler returns, puzzles the will ;
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.”

In numberless instances this instinctive fear of death and what may flow from it has prevented the commission of an awful crime. And this natural dread of death not only benefits the individual by restraining him from sin, but it also tends to the preservation of homes, the stability of governments, the progress of civilization, and the general welfare of the race.

It requires no argument to prove that the man who has a living faith in Jesus Christ will hold very different opinions in respect to death from one who rejects the claims of the Gospel. In certain respects death will be the same, both as to its nature and its effects, to both, but this similarity will pertain only to what is of brief duration and minor importance. Concerning all that lies beyond a very limited sphere there is a wide divergence. The one looks forward to a life of peace and happiness in a land which lies beyond the range of mortal vision but which is clearly discerned by the eye of faith. The other has no such anticipation. Whatever he may hope concerning his well-being in the future he has no settled belief.

*The Christian view
of death.*

The followers of Christ not only proclaim the certainty of a future existence, which the materialist rejects and the agnostic doubts, but they also have higher and nobler conceptions of the

character of that life than are entertained by the adherents to any other religious or philosophical system. This being the case, it seems natural to expect that the fear of death will be far less pronounced among Christian people than it is outside of their ranks. If the facts could be ascertained this supposition would probably be found correct. But it would also be shown that the difference between those who are afraid to die and those who are but little concerned as to what death will bring is not wholly of a religious, or even of a moral, nature. There are many wicked men who regard death with indifference, and probably a much larger number of good men who look forward to it with fear.

Too many Christians give a larger share of their thought upon the subject of death to its darker aspects than they do to the brighter shades which appear in its coloring. They think too much of its enmity and too little of its kindly ministrations. They are too much cast down by the defeat which comes in the conflict with death. It is true that the overthrow of the higher nature by the lower one is hard to bear. But the conquest is only apparent. The destruction of the body secures the liberation of the soul.

It is sometimes said that Christ shrank from death and that His reluctance to pass through its experience is proof that it is a most terrible foe. If the close of a perfect life is marked by anxious forebodings, the sinful soul may well be appalled at the prospect of death.

*Christ shrank
from death.*

Probably too much stress has been laid upon this line of argument. Christ undoubtedly had the natural love of life which is common to man, but the sorrow of death to Him did not lie in the mere separation of soul and body. Had death come to Him in its natural form, and involved no more to Him than departure from earth, there can be no doubt that He would have met it with perfect composure. There would have been regret at leaving His work unfinished, and in being parted from those He loved, but this would have been relieved by the thought that the work would be carried on by others and that those who had been His companions on earth would soon be with Him in a happy home into which death could never come. Christ was without sin, and to a sinless being death would present as one of its aspects the appearance of a release from many unpleasant

conditions. The natural home of such a being is not in a world in which sin prevails. To such an one death would seem like the recall of an exile to his native land.

This was not the manner of death that was dreaded by Christ. To Him the enemy came in its most appalling form and under circumstances of inconceivable horror. Maligned, and mocked, and outrageously maltreated by His enemies, deserted by His friends and at length by His Father, suffering the fearful physical tortures of the crucifixion, and bearing upon His soul the sins of the world, it is not strange that under such circumstances death was clothed with terror. Foreseeing all that awaited Him, it could not be otherwise than that His soul should be "exceeding sorrowful" and that His agony should be far beyond mere human endurance.

From this it does not follow that the believer in Christ should have such a shrinking from death as his Master experienced. No human being will ever stand in the same relation to death as did Christ. It is true that He was holy and that man is guilty. But no man bears other sins than his own, and the true Christian is free from the condemnation which is merited by his transgressions. It was not death itself that was so terrible to Christ as He approached the final hour, but the unspeakable sorrow of leaving His disciples among their bitter enemies, the indescribable sufferings of body and of mind, and the appalling spiritual horrors that were inseparable from the completion of the atoning and redemptive work which He came upon earth to perform.

It oftentimes occurs that the fear of death which to the sincere Christian has been a cause of great anxiety in the period of health departs when the final hour draws near. *Fear departs.* Faith grows stronger as the bodily powers fail. God does not and will not desert His children in the time of their extremity. His care is over us all our lives. His grace is offered day by day as it is required. But it is given for the present, not for the future. We live only in the present, and our real needs are confined within its limits. While death is a future event we are not in special need of grace to enable us to meet it. When it becomes a present experience the believing soul will not be left unaided. As Henry Ward Beecher said, dying grace is not to be expected "till it's time to die."

In many cases there is not only an absence of fear when death approaches, but the soul is exultant and triumphant. The dying one feels that instead of dropping out of existence he is entering a new and a far more abundant life. The spirit rises to sublime heights and rejoices that it is to be set free from all the fetters of earth.

Triumph in death.

As a single illustration of this triumph in the final hour, the case of the Rev. Thomas Starr King may be noted. The circumstances were related by an intimate friend who was present at the time of his departure. When almost at the close of his earthly career, with his bodily strength rapidly failing but his mind clear and active, Mr. King exclaimed, "I wish I could describe my feelings. It is strange! I feel all the privileges and greatness of the future. . . . I see a great future before me. It already looks grand, beautiful." He had for years made a careful study of matters pertaining to the future state, and he seemed to exult in the thought that he was soon to gain practical knowledge concerning many things which had hitherto been to him the great mysteries of the spirit world.

There are many other points which would be included if there were room for an exhaustive statement of the Christian view of death. Of these, one of the most pleasant, and one which should be often dwelt upon, is the thought of death as a journey to some better land which is to be a happy and a permanent abode. This view recognizes death as an aid to progress. Instead of remaining here for a long period, we move on to larger fields and greater opportunities. Here it is common to go upon a journey to some distant point in pursuit of pleasure or for the restoration of health. And, if life has been passed aright, the summons to leave the world will be only the call to commence a journey that will be for our endless happiness and our highest welfare. Death will lead us to a nobler state of being than we could ever attain while we remained inhabitants of earth. Even if life is pleasant and fruitful, death will open the way to the attainment of better things. This thought has been happily expressed in a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, which is now going the rounds of the papers, and of which the first verse is as follows:—

A journey.

"I think of death as some delightful journey
That I shall take when all my tasks are done,

Though life has given me a heaping measure
Of all best gifts, and many a cup of pleasure,
Still better things await me further on."

Another light in which death should be viewed by the Christian is in that of a release. While he remains upon earth he is necessarily and wisely subjected to many things which, though designed to work for his good, are in themselves great evils. He is constantly exposed to suffering and bereavement and misfortune. And, what is immeasurably worse than all these ills combined, he is under the dominion of sin. Very few, even of the most devoted servants of God, claim to reach a plane upon which they live without departure from the perfect way in which He has directed them to walk. And most of those who profess to have made such progress in piety that they do not commit any known sin, freely admit that there still remain in their characters many imperfections. The limitations of human nature and the conditions under which men live are such constant and powerful obstacles to a perfect development of the spiritual qualities that few or none ever reach the lofty heights which pious souls earnestly desire to attain. *A release.*

From these and all other evils which affect the body and the soul death will bring a release. The fiery trials through which the believer has often been obliged to pass are ended. The body will no more be tortured with pain. The unrest of the soul ceases forever. But the supreme benefit conferred by death is the breaking of the shackles of sin. The higher nature, which has constantly been limited and too often almost subverted by the lower qualities, is freed from its entanglements and rises to the plane upon which it was designed to live. Thus to the weary struggling one who finds life an incessant conflict with sin, and who is often defeated in the strife, death may properly appear as a welcome release. It marks the close of a great and a long-continued contest. With its advent the conflict with evil comes to an end. The warfare is then accomplished and the mantle of peace falls upon the departing soul.

Without entering into further details of the view which the Christian should take of death, it will be well to consider briefly some of the features which have no special reference to any particular system of religion, but which are presented to the race at large. *Death beneficent.*

Prominent among the qualities which thoughtful men must ascribe to death is that of beneficence. Though in many ways it is a great disaster, it is not an unmixed evil. Even if we take the extreme view that it came upon man purely as the penalty of violated law, that it is unnatural and is a subversion of the real purpose of God and the true destiny of man, we shall find interwoven with its effects many things which soften its forbidding appearance. More than this. If we carefully consider the matter we shall be convinced that in the present condition of the world death is the agent by means of which certain positively beneficent ends are accomplished. A broad view of the subject will compel the belief that it is well, both for the individual and the race, that death is in the world.

Considering it from the lower plane of the merely animal existence, we find that death is really a friend. When age comes on and the infirmities which are inseparable from advancing years weigh more and more heavily as time is extended, the change which will be wrought by death must present a much gentler and more hopeful appearance than the outlook upon an unending life in this world could offer. Continuous existence under such conditions would be regarded only as a calamity. John Foster found the idea of death "superlatively grand and consoling," and declared that "the expectation of living here, and living thus always, would be indeed a prospect of overwhelming despair." Probably every man who considers what results would flow from an unlimited continuance of this life after the period of extreme old age had been reached will heartily assent to this conclusion.

Not only is death a friend to the individual, but it is also beneficent to the race. It may not fully meet the theory of those who hold that "the greatest good to the greatest number" is the end toward which all the energies of the universe ought to be directed; but it does insure whatever measure of happiness life may hold to an immensely larger number of people than could otherwise exist. This fact is apparent to all classes of men. Savage as well as civilized man has perceived its truth and has recognized its beneficence.

One of the North American Indian tribes has a curious tradition which illustrates this point. It is to the effect that upon the arrival of their tribe in this world, which was the fifth in

From the standpoint of nature.

Effect upon the race.

which they had found a home, efforts were made to divine their fate. At length one who was living with them, though he was believed to be one of the "children of the sky," threw a stone into the water, saying, "If it sinks we perish; if it floats we live." When the stone sank the people were angry and made many complaints, but they were soon silenced by the reply: "If we all live, and continue to increase as we have done, the earth will soon be too small to hold us, and there will be no room for the cornfields. It is better that each of us should live but a time on this earth and then leave and make room for our children."¹

It has already been noted that the progress of the race is largely due to the fact that one generation follows another, and each inherits the treasures which its predecessors have secured. Many who have made a careful study of the sciences bearing especially upon this subject go so far as to claim that death was the direct means of opening the way for the appearance of the higher forms of life, and that without its agency man could not have come into the world. Whether this claim be admitted or not, it cannot be denied that so far as the race at large is concerned, death is really "a servant and helpmeet of life."²

When we view death from its spiritual side we find equally convincing proofs of its beneficence. There is a far too general inclination to shut the thought of death from the mind and to defer preparation for that great event. Spiritual influence. But a death in the circle of his relatives or friends turns the attention of even the most worldly man, for a time at least, to this great subject. The conviction is then forced upon him that he will be obliged to follow the departed, and the importance of placing himself in readiness to meet the summons to leave the world is impressed upon his mind. In many cases the nobler instincts are aroused and desires for a better life are awakened. Thus the natural death of one may result in the opening of spiritual life to another.

It is not always easy to realize that affliction may be the means of great good to those upon whom it falls. Sometimes when our dear ones are called away the stroke is so heavy, the grief is so sharp, and the sense of loss is so great and so persistent that it seems as though nothing but A means of grace to the bereaved.

¹ Washington Matthews, LL. D., *Navaho Legends*.

² Newman Smyth, D. D., *The Place of Death in Evolution*.

evil could come out of such a terrible experience. And yet when the mind becomes more composed it is seen that death often has been, and always may be, a means of grace to those who are bereaved.

As in the natural world "all sunshine makes the desert," so in human lives unbroken prosperity tends to spiritual unfruitfulness. The legitimate effect of sorrow is to quicken the spiritual perceptions and enrich and ennoble the soul. Under the discipline of bereavement the heart unsatisfied with the fleeting things of earth should turn more fully to God. Doing this, the sorrowing one will find a profound truth in the apparently paradoxical assertion of Christ, "Blessed are they that mourn."

The more fully the revelation of truth has been made to man, the more clearly is the fact revealed that great blessings may come as the result of affliction. In the early history of the race long life under pleasant conditions appeared to be the chief good. Gradually the spiritual nature came into prominence and the development of character was seen to be the real purpose of life in this world. Affliction, which was once regarded as a mark of the Divine displeasure, came to be recognized as a means of awakening the energies and developing the powers of the human soul. Man was made for a nobler purpose than merely to enjoy life, and God has been teaching him this fact by means of a progressive revelation. As Lord Bacon has said: "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God's favor."

It is natural to shrink from sorrow. We desire happiness, and it is not wrong that we should do so. But when affliction comes, as it surely will, it should be borne with resignation. It is not to be regarded as punishment or as an indication of God's anger. The Lord "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." As the world is constituted, death is inevitable and sorrow must come to all. But affliction is to be considered as kindly discipline. Though in the present it seems hard to bear, "yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit" to those who humbly and submissively yield to its influence and who strive to learn the lessons which it is designed to teach. It is true that happiness is not to be despised. Members of families whose circle remains for many

Not punishment.

years unbroken have great cause for thanksgiving. Yet we need to remember that they are not more truly the objects of the love and mercy of God than are those who have been called to mourn.

“ Oh, deem not they are blest alone
Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep ;
The Power who pities man, has shown
A blessing for the eyes that weep.”

It is often the case that death exerts a beneficent influence upon the household into which it enters. By the removal of one of the family the survivors are more closely drawn to each other than they ever were before. *Influence upon family and social life.* The family life becomes sweeter and more helpful, an element of sacredness is introduced, and the ties of kindred are strengthened by the common affliction. The remaining members of many a family have been brought into a more intimate and more affectionate union around the grave of one who had been taken from them than they ever would have been, or perhaps could have been, if death had not invaded the home.

Then, too, death brings into exercise the finer qualities of human nature. The sympathy of friends and acquaintances in the hour of bereavement is not only a great comfort to those who are called to mourn, but it also purifies and strengthens the spiritual life of all from whose hearts it flows. Thus death becomes truly “a means of grace,” not to the relatives only, but to the wider circle of those to whom the departed one was known.

In a world of holiness and happiness death, as it now comes to man, would be a calamity beyond the power of language to describe. But in a world where sin prevails it is not *Meets present conditions.* an unmixed evil. Severity is tempered with mercy and there are alleviations for the deepest woe. Continuous life here, under present conditions of the body and soul, would be unendurable. It would lead us to pray for death more earnestly, perhaps, than we now pray for life. The fact that death has a place in the divine order of the universe should convince us that the purposes which it serves must be both wise and just. If to what knowledge we now possess we add a reasonable degree of faith, we shall be able not only to regard it with composure, but from our deepest hearts to say,

“ Thank God for Death: bright thing with dreary name.”

CHAPTER VI

THE DEAD BODY

WHEN respiration and circulation have permanently ceased, the body, as an organism, is said to be dead. But though the body as a unit dies when "the citadel of life" surrenders, a part at least of the organs do not immediately lose all their vitality. These organs may continue to act for several hours after the body as a whole has ceased to live, but they cannot act in concert. The stomach may secrete gastric juice and the liver secrete bile. The nails and hair may grow a very little, and even the heart may beat for a few minutes after death has occurred. I have seen strong pulsations of the heart of a dog after his body had been cut in two by a railroad train. The same phenomenon might be observed in the case of a man if he suffered a similar accident. For some hours after the death of the body the muscles can, by being subjected to electric currents, be made to contract. As dead matter never manifests irritability, these movements are conclusive proof that some measure of vitality still remains.

In a comparatively short time, in most cases in a few hours, the life of all of the organs is brought to a close. They may be intact, and appear to be uninjured, but the vital principle has departed and only dead matter remains. This extinction of the energies of life is followed by chemical action, which leads to the dissolution of the body itself. The rapidity with which the changes which are thus induced will proceed varies with the cause of death, the condition of the body, and the temperature in which it is placed; but unless arrested by artificial means, their destructive work will go on until the whole physical frame is resolved into the sixteen¹ elements of which it was composed. Thus it will literally "return unto the ground" from which, as Scripture asserts and analysis clearly proves, all of its materials came.

¹ H. N. Martin, F. R. S., *The Human Body*.

When this is accomplished the triumph of death over the physical man is complete.

Among various peoples the dead body has been regarded as a source of defilement. To the Jews a corpse was utterly unclean. Any one touching a dead body was thereby rendered unclean for seven days, and was obliged to ^{Ceremonially unclean.} go through a stated form of purification before he could appear in the congregation. All who came into a tent in which was a corpse, or who touched either the body of one who had been slain with the sword in the field, the bone of a dead man, or even a grave, were defiled, and required a ceremonial purification before they could enter the sanctuary of the Lord. Only in exceptional cases could a priest take an active part in a burial, and the high priest was wholly debarred from such service.

Various explanations of these strict requirements have been made. From the standpoint of hygiene the regulations affecting the common people are seen to be wise and useful. They would do much to prevent the spread of certain classes of disease, and would compel the people to have their burial-places outside the villages and towns. Then, too, it would keep the Hebrews from following the Egyptian custom of embalming the body in order to preserve it for an indefinite period, and of retaining it in the house in which the family lived.

The priests were prohibited from touching a dead body because they were the representatives of God, and between God and death there is a direct antagonism. Consequently everything having connection with death must be unholy. "God is life, absolutely independent, inviolable life. It is not seemly that persons, consecrated to this living God, should come into contact with death."¹ Incidentally these requirements indicate that death is to be regarded as something more than a merely natural event. It is necessary and in various ways is beneficent, but it also has elements which are of an entirely different character. The prohibitions which have been noted were designed to impress this fact upon the minds of the people. It was not, however, any part of their purpose to lead to a neglect of the body, and they did not have that effect. In all ages the Hebrews have tenderly cared for the remains of their departed relatives and friends.

¹ Dr. Hermann Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*.

The early Romans also held that contact with a dead body rendered the living unclean. All the persons present at a funeral were sprinkled with water by a priest, and after the services were concluded the members of the family, and even the house itself, were subjected to certain rites which were supposed to remove the contamination to which they had been exposed. Many of the Greeks held a similar opinion, and required all who attended a funeral to be purified by the application of water before they could enter the temples or worship the gods. Something of this kind has been observed among peoples who were widely separated by distance and who had reached very different degrees of civilization. And at the present day there are, in various parts of the world, those who carefully observe certain rules after handling a dead body.

A kind of superstitious fear of the dead body seems to be very widely disseminated. The Navaho Indians long had a belief that if they looked upon a dead body they would soon die. This fear appears to have been based upon the supposition that the soul of the departed had gone to another world, and that a demon had come to abide with the body. Even now most of the members of this tribe "believe a house haunted or accursed in which a human being dies. They abandon it, never enter it again, and usually destroy it."¹ It is only in very recent times that any of these people have built substantial dwellings. Whether the change in this respect indicates that the superstition is losing its power over their minds, or they have found some means by the use of which they think it possible to avert the threatened evil, is not known.

The Eskimos at Smith Sound also vacate a house in which a person dies, and do not use it again for a long period. In many cases the dwelling is abandoned forever. Among civilized people this fear of a dead body is widely prevalent, but it is not often exhibited in so marked a degree. Yet there are many intelligent people who would rather not be left alone with a corpse in the daytime, and who would be really afraid to be the only living person to stay in a house with a dead body at night. There are many, too, who have a very decided aversion to entering, in the dark and alone, a room in which a person

¹ Washington Matthews, LL. D., *Navaho Legends*.



SARCOPHAGUS OF AI.

has recently died. Whether this fear of the dead body, and even of the place in which the body has been temporarily laid, is due to a natural abhorrence of death which was implanted by the Creator in the nature of man, or comes from some other source, cannot be determined. Probably it is to a great extent instinctive, and was designed to bring home to the mind and the heart of man the great fact that death is a moral admonition as well as a physical necessity.

In many cases the feeling inspired by the presence of a dead body is one of awe rather than of fear. There is something impressive in the ruin wrought by death. It brings to the mind of man a sentiment that is partly dread Inspires a feeling of awe. and partly reverence. It is a far nobler emotion than fear, and is more solemn than the feeling that is prompted by any of the other ordinary occurrences of the world.

Perhaps no other such beautiful and accurate description of this feeling has ever been penned as that in which Thomas De Quincey relates how he was impressed when he was a child of but little more than six years of age. At the noontide of a mid-summer day he stole, softly and alone, into the room in which lay the dead body of his sister, who was some two years older than himself, and to whom he was tenderly attached. After noting the change that death had made, he says: "I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow,—the most mournful that ear ever heard. Mournful! that is saying nothing. It was a wind that had swept the fields of mortality for a hundred centuries. Many times since, upon a summer day, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn Memnonian but saintly swell; it is in this world the one sole *audible* symbol of eternity. And three times in my life I have happened to hear the same sound in the same circumstances, namely, when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day."¹ This mysterious wind has been heard and felt by many a mourner in the ages in which death has reigned in the world. And when its solemn vibration strikes the ear it renders still more profound the feeling of awe with which every thoughtful person must be impressed when alone in a room in which a dead body is laid.

¹ *Suspiria De Profundis.*

From ancient times people of almost every race and clime have cared for the bodies of their departed companions. There is unquestionable evidence that prehistoric man buried his dead, and that many of the savage races have, from an early period, given some degree of attention to the remains of those who had been associated with them during life. In all civilized nations the care of the dead body has been regarded as a matter of great importance, and all the purer forms of religion have made it one of their prominent requirements.

The methods of caring for the body immediately after death have varied, in many respects, in different lands. Some customs, however, have been common to nearly all times and places. Among these are the closing of the eyes and mouth, the washing of the body and placing the limbs in a natural position. Anointing the body with oil and wrapping it in a linen cloth, or dressing it in garments similar to those worn by the living, have also been largely practiced. In some countries, after a certain degree of preparation has been made, a priest prays over the body, sprinkles it with holy water, and burns incense in the room in which it is placed. The principles of the Christian religion teach that although the body is the inferior part of man it is by no means to be despised. It is the "habitation of the soul" while life remains, and it is fitting that it should receive respectful treatment when its nobler tenant has departed.

Some of the Arab tribes carry their regard for the body to a great extreme. Any mutilation they consider a terrible misfortune. This, because they believe that the possession of a perfect physical frame at the time of death is one of the essential conditions of their admission to heaven. In war, especially with cannibals, they fight with the greatest desperation as long as they can maintain their ground, but when defeat appears to be inevitable they flee from the foe. Their retreat is not due so much to a desire to prolong their lives as it is to anxiety to keep their bodies from being mangled or destroyed by their enemies.

Various peoples have made efforts to protect the body from dissolution. Of these the Egyptians have been the most prominent and the most successful. From a remote period they practiced the art of embalming the bodies of the dead. They seem

to have adopted this custom because they believed that the immortal part of the man would at various times temporarily return to the body, and at length, perhaps after the lapse of ages, it would enter its former habitation and the body would awake to a new life. *Preserving the body.*

There were various processes of embalming. These differed mainly in the degree of thoroughness with which the operation was performed and the quantity and quality of the spices which were used. The internal organs were removed, the body was soaked in a strong brine for about ten weeks, and then saturated with bitumen, a substance which contains the well-known antiseptic, carbolic acid. The body was also wrapped very closely in a linen cloth, and finally was put into a coffin. So long as it is kept from air and moisture the mummy, as the body thus treated is called, remains unchanged, but exposure causes it to crumble quickly to dust. As late as the year 1881 the mummy of King Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the time of the Exodus, was discovered and was found to be in a good state of preservation.

The great majority of Christian people, and millions who hold other forms of religious belief, make no effort to prevent, or to greatly retard, the natural processes by which the body, as an organism, is totally destroyed. Yet it is often desirable to protect the corpse for a limited time from decomposition. This end can be accomplished by various methods.

One of the simplest means, and one which has long been in extensive use, though it is open to serious objections, is the placing of the body in a box which is lined on the bottom and sides with ice. The use of diluted carbolic acid upon the body and sprayed into the nostrils, with a small quantity of ice placed over the stomach, has, in some cases at least, proved equally serviceable. But in recent years a somewhat simple process of embalming has been quite commonly adopted. This consists in injecting into the arteries and the cavities of the body a mixture of poisonous but highly antiseptic substances known as "embalming fluid." By the use of this fluid, in quantities ranging from two to five or six quarts, bodies can be kept for several days in the hottest and closest weather, without perceptible change. In recent years a mixture of formaldehyde, a substance obtained from wood alcohol, and various other materials has

been made which is injected in the same manner as the ordinary fluid and which will preserve the natural appearance of the body for an indefinite period. But in the great majority of cases it is not desirable to keep the body many days after death, and the simplest means by which it can be kept from decomposition for a brief time will probably be the most satisfactory ones which can be employed.

Although the dead body should not be either neglected or despised, the distinction between it and the individual by whom it was inhabited should be sharply drawn. It is natural to cling to the body of one who was dear to us, as though it could be useful to ourselves or to the departed. But it has served its purpose. It was the home in which the person dwelt in the days of his earthly pilgrimage. He needs it no longer, and we should calmly and even cheerfully, allow it to return to the dust. We may be sure that if one whom we call dead could speak to those who weep over his body he would express the sentiment ascribed by Edwin Arnold to one who died at Azan:—

Not the real man.

“Cease your tears and let it lie;
It was mine—it is not I.”

CHAPTER VII

THE FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

AMONG different peoples, and with the same races at different periods of their history, the methods of finally disposing of the dead body have varied greatly. These variations have been due in part to circumstances which were *Different methods.* beyond human control and, perhaps to an equal extent, to changes in the belief of the living regarding the fate of the individuals who died.

It is plain that to a considerable extent natural conditions must influence the living in their selection of the methods in which they will dispose of the bodies of the dead. *Uniformity impossible.* In the Arctic regions, for instance, the plan of burial several feet under ground, which is common in warmer climates, is almost impossible to follow. Cremation would be still more difficult to perform. Even if the same religious belief were common to all, the widely varying conditions under which men are placed would prevent a uniform disposition of the bodies of their dead. It is equally plain that the method of disposing of the body that will be adopted by savage or barbarous tribes will be very different from that which intelligent and Christian people will follow. The Christian would give the body of an enemy decent burial. Education and religion have taught him that a degree of sacredness attaches to the body of any and every man. With the cannibal the case is entirely different. He believes that if he merely kills his enemy the spirit still lives and may avenge the injury which it has suffered by the death of the body. But he also thinks that if he eats the body of his fallen foe he thereby makes both the body and spirit of the enemy a part of himself. Thus, he imagines, he is not only protected from the injury which he feared, but is made stronger and more courageous than he otherwise could have been.

Probably the earliest method of disposing of the dead body was by burial. This plan was certainly followed by some pre-

historic races and by the leading nations in the earlier part of the period concerning which we have a credible *Burial.* record. No uniform system of burial was followed.

In some countries the flesh was removed from the bones before burial, though this does not appear to have been a universal custom. In many places and in various countries the dead were buried in a sitting posture. Skeletons have been found buried in a circle, as though they were around a camp-fire or were gathered at a feast. The cave dwellers set apart certain caves for the dead and walled up the entrances after bodies had been deposited therein. In early times some of the peoples who had made a little progress toward civilization covered their dead with large heaps of stones. Some even made rude vaults of loose stones and in these deposited the bodies of their friends who had died. Large burial mounds, called barrows, have also been found in many parts of the world.

Burial in caves was, to some extent, practiced in the period of early Scripture history. When Sarah died, Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah, "the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the border thereof round about." Then the patriarch "buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field."

As a rule the Hebrews, in all their history, have been careful to bury their dead. To neglect the body of a deceased relative or friend was regarded as a great wrong, and for a *Why practiced.* man to "have no burial" was considered a dire calamity. The early Christians not only carefully buried their dead, but they also considered the burial of the poor and of strangers as "the last and greatest duty of love." In times of persecution it was often necessary to perform the burial service at night, and as secretly as possible, but even then it was not neglected. This desire that the body should receive proper care and be decently interred was probably due in part to an instinctive feeling that it ought not to be neglected; but the idea was doubtless strengthened by a hope, dim and uncertain at first, but increasing in strength during the Old Testament dispensation and developing into a clear belief after the resurrection of Christ, that a new life awaited it beyond the grave.

The ancient Assyrians buried their dead, but this seems to have been done largely as a means of protection of the living.

It was thought that if a body was allowed to remain unburied the soul would have no honest means of continuing its life and would return to its former home and trouble the people whom it had known when it was in the flesh.

In some periods of their history the Greeks held that the soul would never find a home as long as the body remained unburied. Therefore they were very careful to bury their dead whenever it was possible to do so. If one of their friends perished at sea, and the body could not be recovered, a tomb was built and the name of the deceased was loudly called in hope that the soul might thus be induced to seek the home which had been prepared for its use. Many of the Romans believed that the souls of those whose bodies were not buried would be compelled to wander on the banks of the River Styx for one hundred years before they could cross over to the other side. This regard for the dead body was shared by the other nations of Europe, though the reasons for the respect which was paid to it varied greatly in the different countries in which it prevailed.

Some primitive peoples have placed the bodies of their dead in trees, or upon scaffolds, where they would be reasonably secure from beasts of prey but would be destroyed by the action of the elements. Others have fastened the bodies in streams of running water until the flesh was removed. Still others have buried them in large rivers or in the sea. For a long period it was a custom of people who lived near the Ganges to lay the remains of their dead upon the banks, when the water was low, so that with the rising of the sacred river the bodies, with all of their sins, might be washed away.

*Exposure to
destructive
agencies.*

The Parsees place the bodies of their dead on large stone structures which are called the Towers of Silence. The vultures, which are always abundant in these localities, quickly consume every particle of flesh, and the bones then fall through a grating upon the ground. This method is not adopted from any want of respect for the body but on account of the religious convictions of those who practice it.

These people regard the earth, which produces their food, as holy, and think that it would be polluted by the burial of a dead body. They also consider fire one of the most sacred of all the elements, and even make it an object of worship. Therefore, to burn a dead body would be a flagrant act of profanation.

In one of the ancient books of the Parsees the question, "Where shall we lay the bones of the dear one," is answered as follows: "The worshipers of Mazda shall erect a building out of the reach of the dog, the fox, and the wolf, and wherein rain water cannot stay. Such a building shall they erect, if they can afford it, with stones, mortar, and earth. If they cannot afford it, they shall lay down the dead man, on the ground, on his carpet and his pillow, clothed with the light of heaven and beholding the sun."

It is impossible to tell at what time cremation, or the destruction of the body by burning, was first resorted to, or what causes led to its adoption. It is certain, however, that it was sometimes practiced by prehistoric peoples, and that to a limited extent it came into use at an early period in various civilized communities. It had come into extensive use in Europe at the opening of the Christian era, and it is probable that at about this period it commenced a very marked decline. For ages this method existed, and it is still followed, in countries and communities in which it has been far from universal. As a rule, where cremation has been practiced, the ashes have received as much care as has, at the same period and in the same communities, been bestowed upon bodies which were buried in the ground.

It is claimed that in India cremation was adopted in place of burial on account of a change in, or a development of, the prevailing religious belief. Many of the Greeks, it is said, preferred cremation because they thought that fire would remove the uncleanness which was inherent in a dead body, and would also free the soul from the gross matter in which it had been imprisoned and allow it to soar to a home on high. They placed the body upon a pile of combustible materials and poured upon it ointments and perfumes. When the flames died out the coals were extinguished, and the ashes of the body, together with any bones which remained unburned, were carefully gathered and deposited in an urn.

Much the same methods of cremation were followed by the Romans while they practiced this plan of disposing of the body. After being wrapped in cloth made of asbestos, which is not consumed by fire, the body was laid upon the pile and the nearest relative, with face averted, applied the torch. The ashes

were carefully gathered. In many cases they were placed in sepulchres which were strewn with flowers and before which incense was freely burned.

The Hebrews were strongly opposed to the cremation of the bodies of their friends. They seem to have regarded it as a means of utter destruction of all that had made the man. On this account they willingly burned the bodies of great criminals, and rejoiced when the bones of their enemies were thrown into the flames. *Opposition to cremation.*

As some of the heathen nations with which they came in contact practiced cremation, the early Christians seem to have inferred that this method of disposing of the bodies of the dead would partake of the irreligious nature of the people by whom the custom had been adopted. This fact unquestionably had much to do with their choice of the earlier method of burial. Yet this argument should have had but very little weight. In fact, it was hardly worthy of consideration. For cremation was to some extent practiced by people who were not heathen, while many others who had no knowledge of the true God preferred to bury rather than burn the bodies of their dead.

Another and perhaps a more potent reason why the Christian people in early times disapproved of cremation is to be found in the fact that there prevailed among them a feeling that the burning of the body might interfere with, or possibly prevent, its resurrection. If their idea had been correct the martyrs who were burned at the stake for their fidelity to what they believed to be the truth would have miserably perished. But science has shown that this objection is entirely groundless. Whether it is buried or cremated, the body is eventually separated into the primal elements of which it was composed, and the particular method by which the destruction of the organism is secured can have no effect whatever upon its future condition. When burial is practiced, the destructive process, which commences soon after death, goes steadily on, though sometimes it requires many years for its completion. By cremation the work which nature takes so long a time to perform is accomplished in a few hours. In the one case nature burns the body by the slow process of oxidation. In the other man burns it quickly by artificial means. The body is as truly burned in the one case as it is in the other.

Certain evils which are inseparable from burial in the vicinity of cities and towns, and which are not wholly unknown in less thickly settled localities, have, in recent times, been growing more and more apparent, and have caused a much greater degree of interest than they attracted at an earlier period. The progress of sanitary science has shown that the presence of bodies decaying in the soil may become a source of great danger to people living near burial-places. It has been proved that in many densely populated localities a great deal of sickness has been caused by the contamination of the drinking water and of the air by the decomposition of bodies in near-by cemeteries. Not a few cases of illness originated in this manner have had a fatal termination. Thus the dead have been allowed to become the means of destroying the living. The removal of bodies, which in cities sometimes becomes necessary, and which is occasionally done on a large scale, and the desecration of graves which often results from the encroachments of business interests, are minor evils, it is true, but are still of sufficient magnitude to be sincerely deplored.

In the more open country the dangers to health from the burial of bodies are not wholly avoided, but they are slight as compared with those which threaten the residents of closely settled districts. There are fewer bodies to be buried in any one spot, the circulation of the air is much less obstructed, and, while an occasional well may be contaminated, the water supply of a large number of people is not rendered impure. In such localities, if dry ground is selected for the purpose, the evils of burial in the earth are reduced to their lowest terms. It is the most convenient, and, when all things pertaining to it are considered, is perhaps the most desirable means of disposing of the dead body.

With the increase of knowledge concerning the evils attending the burial of bodies there has been awakened a great deal of interest in the subject of cremation. In the principal countries of Europe it came into notice earlier, and has received a greater degree of attention than it has in the United States. Since 1882 this method of disposing of the dead body has been practiced in Paris to a considerable extent and has been rapidly growing in favor. In the year 1895 the number of bodies incinerated exceeded four thousand, and for

*Dangers of
burial.*

*Increased interest
in cremation.*

several years past the proportion of cremations to the total number of deaths has been about one in thirteen. In 1886 a society for the purpose of popularizing this method of disposing of the remains of the dead was organized in the United States. Its success was encouraging to the friends of the movement and led to the formation of other societies in all sections of the country. In 1897 there were thirty-three crematories in operation, and wherever one had been established the society in charge was reported prosperous.

It is a great mistake to suppose that cremation in Christian lands is practiced in the same manner as it was by the pagan nations of antiquity. The revolting features of placing the body on a large pile of combustible materials and burning it in the open air, in the same way that refuse is often destroyed, are entirely done away. In cremation by modern methods everything is as neat, orderly, and reverential as it can be with any method which answers the purpose for which incineration is performed. *Modern methods.*

The body is not burned like wood placed upon a fire. Neither flame nor fuel is seen by the spectators. The reduction of the body to ashes is effected by oxygen which has been raised to a very high temperature and which forms such a chemical union with the elements of the body that, without the slightest contact with fire, it disappears as silently and quickly as snow wastes away when it is placed in the clear light of the sun.

One of the principal crematories in this country is located on an eminence in a beautiful cemetery near Germantown, and in the city limits of Philadelphia. The building, which is quite ornamental, contains, in addition to the incinerating plant, a chapel which is capable of seating three hundred persons. In the walls a large number of niches are provided in which to place, either temporarily or permanently, the ashes of cremated bodies.

When desired, a funeral service is held in the chapel. The body, lying in an ordinary coffin or casket, rests upon a catafalque which, when the religious exercises are completed, is lowered, on an elevator, to the crematory. The coffin is then placed upon a traveler resting on a table which is mounted on wheels and stands on a track leading into the retort in which the incineration is to be performed. A white cloth, that has

been made comparatively fire-proof by saturation in a strong solution of alum, is wrapped around the coffin to prevent the wood from igniting before it reaches its proper place. Then the door is opened, and the table with its burden is pushed into the retort, the walls of which present a reddened color caused by the intense heat to which they have been subjected. The table is then withdrawn and the door is closed so tightly that no air can enter and no gases can escape. Everything is so systematically arranged that all these preparations in the crematory occupy but very little time. In about three hours after the door of the retort is closed the coffin has been converted into charcoal and the body reduced to grayish white ashes. These are separated and the ashes are put into an urn, or a small bronze casket, and placed in a niche in the chapel, buried in the cemetery, or delivered to the relatives of the deceased, as they may choose.

The method pursued in the crematory at Paris, which is the largest and most completely equipped one in the world, varies but little from that which has just been described. In Paris, however, the retort is heated to a higher temperature, about fifteen hundred degrees, and the process of reducing the body of an adult to ashes is completed in a little less than an hour. These ashes measure some three or four pints and weigh from two to two and a half pounds. In some cases they are placed in urns and removed by the relatives of the dead. In others they are put in urns which are placed in niches in the crematory which are bought with the privilege of perpetual use. But most of the poorer classes of people who have bodies incinerated hire niches for a term of five years. At the end of this period the ashes are turned from the urns into a common grave.

For reasons which have already been indicated cremation is strongly recommended by many who have made a special study of sanitary affairs. It is certainly free from some of the evils which cannot be wholly separated from the burial of the body in the earth. But to many people it seems very repulsive, and some regard it as nothing less than sacrilegious. Many others take an entirely different view. Like the late Professor S. D. Gross of the University of Pennsylvania, they "look upon incinerating the human body as a beautiful art in comparison with burying it." Bishop Phillips Brooks

expressed a belief "that there are no true objections to the practice of cremation, and a good many excellent reasons why it should become common;" and Kate Field declared that "cremation is not only the healthiest and cleanest, but the most poetical way of disposing of the dead." Many other people, eminent in different professions, have held opinions similar to those which have been quoted, while perhaps a greater number, whose views are equally entitled to respect, have been firmly opposed to this method of treating the bodies of their departed friends.

Where the conditions are such that only sentiment needs to be considered it is probable that in the majority of cases burial of the body will be preferred to cremation. In places *Sentiment in favor of burial.* in which the burial of the dead would endanger the health and threaten the life of the living, sentiment should yield to duty, and the safer method of cremation should if possible be adopted. To the departed it can make no difference whatever. But where burial is reasonably safe many who mourn will feel that it is far less sorrowful to allow the inevitable destruction of the body to be "wrought only by the gentle hand of Nature" than it is to accelerate the process by subjecting the tenement of clay to the more forcible action of fire.

Without regard to the method which has been adopted for disposing of the dead body, it has always seemed necessary to set apart places in which the remains could be al- *The last resting-place.* lowed to rest permanently. Many of the Egyptians, and other people by whom embalming was practiced, kept the bodies of their relatives in their own homes for months, and sometimes for many years. Where cremation has been adopted the ashes of the dead have not infrequently been placed in the houses in which their kindred dwelt. But these have not been universal rules. In the vast majority of cases the embalmed bodies have been buried and the ashes of those which have been burned have been placed in caves or vaults, or, in common with bodies which have received no special treatment, interred in the cemeteries which were in common use for burial purposes.

In Egypt, and near several European cities, extensive catacombs, long galleries underground with excavations in the sides for tombs, may be found, while in every civilized land cemeteries, or places set apart for the burial of bodies in the earth, are

to be seen in all inhabited localities. In the vicinity of many of the great centres of population these cemeteries are so extensive as to really deserve the common name of "cities of the dead."

The Jews were anxious to be buried in their own country, and after the dispersion it was not unusual for wealthy individuals of this race to send to the Holy Land for earth in which, after death, their bodies could repose. All religious people regard the burial-place as a sacred spot, and some denominations of Christians perform an impressive service of consecration of the ground before any bodies are placed therein. Often, too, the cemetery is spoken of as "God's acre," the conception being that of a field in which the bodies of His children "are laid down as seed for eternity."

It was long supposed that the catacombs of Rome were originally sand-pits or quarries, but comparatively recent investigations seem to prove that this theory was incorrect.

The catacombs.

They also indicate that these galleries were not, as has been quite generally believed, used as burial-places by both Christians and Pagans. The evidence is very strong that the catacombs "were constructed by Christians in the earliest ages of Christianity for the burial of their own dead exclusively."¹

The catacombs of Egypt, in the vicinity of Thebes, occupy nearly the entire base of a mountain and are probably the most extensive in the world. In and near Rome there are more than fifty catacombs in which the bodies of not less than six millions of people have been interred. The catacombs of Paris are also very capacious. It is thought that there have been some three million interments therein. Near Naples, and in the vicinity of other cities in Southern Europe, there are catacombs which contain a vast number of tombs.

The early Hebrews had their cemeteries beyond the bounds of their cities and towns. At a later period in the history of this

Location of cemeteries.

race many who could afford to do so had private sepulchres. These were sometimes stone structures built in their gardens. Such was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa, in which the body of Christ was laid after His crucifixion. But instances of this kind were exceptional. The masses of the people were obliged to use the public cemeteries as their places for burial.

¹ H. M. Luckock, D. D., *After Death*.

The early Christians often buried their dead near the church edifice. This custom prevailed to a considerable extent in Christian lands down to a very recent period, and in some retired places is still observed. It is supposed that this location was chosen partly because it would be convenient for worshipers who, on the Sabbath day, wished to visit the graves of their loved ones. Perhaps a still stronger motive was found in the then prevalent belief that those who were living in Christ and those who had died in His faith were really one congregation in the presence of God, and formed a great and an inseparable fellowship of saints.

There is in the human mind a feeling, partly instinctive but greatly strengthened by intelligence and piety, that whenever it is possible the bodies of all the members of the family should be buried near each other. As they *Burial with kindred.* were together in life, their remains should not be widely separated after death.

This desire was manifested at an early period in the history of the race, and has been continued through all the ages to the present day. Though by no means wanting in others, it has been particularly strong among religious people. The dying request of the Patriarch Jacob was that his body should not be interred in Egypt, but should be taken to the land of Canaan and be laid to rest in the burying-place of his fathers. Joseph, too, earnestly desired that his grave should not be made in Egypt, and even took an oath of the children of Israel that when God should lead them out of the land they would take with them his bones.

The wish to be buried in one's native land, and near to the graves of relatives and friends, will continue as long as death reigns in the world. Wherever it is possible to do so, the desire should be gratified. It is fitting that the bodies of those who have been closely connected in life by the ties of kindred and affection should rest together when life has closed. This proximity of the graves is still more ardently to be desired when there is reason to cherish the hope that there will be a complete reunion of the family in the resurrection of the just.

The little girl whose earnest wish, as she was leaving the world, was that her mother should be buried by her side, was wise beyond her years, —

“One only wish she uttered,
While life was ebbing fast, —
Sleep by my side, dear mother,
And rise with me at last.”

The sentiment which she expressed is almost universal among the races which represent the higher types of humanity. It is fully approved by reason and has the sanction of religion.

The adornment of cemeteries with trees and shrubs and flowers seems to have been common from very early times, and now

*Adornment of
cemeteries.* receives a still greater degree of attention than it has had at any previous period. It is well that this is the case. No place on earth should be more carefully tended than the one in which the bodies of the departed have been laid. Neglect of the graves of the dead shows that there is something wrong in the hearts of the living. It is not necessary, and is not always possible, to build imposing tombs or erect costly monuments. Sometimes, too, the living have removed far from the locality in which their dead were buried, and are seldom if ever able to visit the graves of those they loved. But unless separated by a distance which makes such attention impossible, the place of interment should be neatly kept, and flowers should be either grown or frequently placed upon the graves.

At some times and in various places there has been a tendency to plant in cemeteries trees like the cypress and weeping willow, which are symbols of mourning, to the almost entire exclusion of those varieties which present a more cheerful appearance. Many of the Oriental people followed the far better plan of planting groves of many different kinds of trees, and of also putting out an abundance of shrubs and flowers. Thus they gave to the resting-places of their dead the appearance of ornamental grounds.

In the vicinity of nearly all cities and towns there are cemeteries which, in addition to their many natural attractions, have been beautified by the planting of trees and flowers, the formation of artificial lakes, and by various other means which the landscape gardener is able to employ. And in many rural places there are cemeteries on beautiful hillsides and in peaceful valleys which have been laid out with such exquisite taste, and so appropriately adorned both by nature and by man, that even for the casual observer they have an unspeakable charm.



THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZEH. (THE GREAT PYRAMID IS THE LARGEST TOMB IN THE WORLD.)

From early times it has been a very common custom to perpetuate the memory of the dead by the erection of slabs or monuments or the building of tombs. Sometimes *Tombs and monuments.* these memorials have been massive constructions, like the pyramids of Egypt. In other cases they have been simple slabs or pillars of stone, or masses of rough stones piled together. Rude tombs which were constructed by the ancient races of Europe and America may still be found in various localities.

Of all the people of early times, the Egyptians paid the greatest degree of attention to the providing of permanent resting-places for the dead. An ancient writer, noting the great difference between the plain homes of the living and the beautifully adorned tombs for the dead, explained the contrast by saying that "the Egyptians call the houses of the living 'inns' because for a short space only we inhabit there, but the sepulchres of the dead they call 'eternal mansions,' because they continue with the gods for an indefinite space." These tombs were built in the desert or cut sometimes for long distances into the hills or mountains. In all cases they were beyond the fields that were suitable for cultivation.

The tombs of Egypt were not merely and only the places in which the bodies of the dead reposed. They were also the sanctuaries of the living. In many respects, too, the tomb resembled a house. It contained two or more rooms, each of which was set apart for a specific purpose. In one of them the priests performed the services required for the dead. In the one used as a sepulchre was a stone sarcophagus in which the body was laid. When the funeral services were completed, the entrance to this chamber was permanently closed.

Within the tomb quite a variety of articles were placed. The claim has been made that seeds which have been buried for thousands of years have been taken from these tombs, and upon being planted have germinated and produced a crop of grain. In cases in which this phenomenon, which if genuine would be almost miraculous, have been described, it is probable that the crafty Arab guides had substituted fresh seeds for those which had actually been buried with the mummy. It is certain that many carefully conducted experiments with seeds known to have been placed in the tombs with the bodies of the dead have

utterly failed to show that they possessed the slightest degree of vitality.

Not infrequently the figures of some of the gods which the people worshiped were placed in the tombs, and extracts from the "Book of the Dead," which were written upon papyrus, were hung upon the walls. The tombs of kings and of wealthy people were adorned by paintings and sculptures, and bore many inscriptions relating to the future life. The tomb was usually prepared during the lifetime of the one who was to be buried therein. Indeed, it seems to have been considered of greater importance to provide a superior place for the body after death than it was to maintain a comfortable home during life.

In modern times it is customary either to provide a tomb or to mark the last resting-place of relatives with a stone or monument. These mementos vary from a simple and inexpensive slab of marble, or even of slate, to the elaborate and beautifully carved monument costing many thousands of dollars. The inscriptions which are carved thereon vary as greatly as do the materials and forms of the memorials upon which they appear. The name of the deceased with the date of birth and death are in very many cases all that is inscribed. Frequently there is added a text of Scripture, a verse of poetry, a pointed moral, or a brief admonition. In other instances there is a statement of the notable deeds and an enumeration of the virtues of the deceased.

The desire to mark the graves of our loved ones with some memorial that shall remain at least as long as the members of the immediate family survive is entirely reasonable, though excessive expenditure in this direction seems to be unwise. The course of several wealthy people who have endowed hospitals or educational institutions in memory of their dead is certainly of greater benefit to the world, and far more truly honors the departed than the erection of the most elaborate tombs or the most beautiful monuments.

The best memorial, and the one which most affects the hearts and lives of others, is a good character. The "imperishable granite" upon which the name is carved will waste away, but the influence of the individual for good or ill will go down the ages and will work out its legitimate result without the slightest regard to the appearance or the cost of the monument which

relatives erect in his honor. Strangers care but little for the flattering inscriptions which are sometimes seen upon slabs and tombs, and those who knew the departed will remember him only by what he has been and what he has done during his earthly life. If it was a bad life the evil growing out of it will be perpetuated. If it was a noble life the influence which it exerted for good will not cease at death. In every such case it will prove true that

“ The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust.”

It is an altogether too general feeling that we leave our dead in their graves and that there they await the resurrection which is to come in a dim and distant future. This is a great mistake. It is only the body that finds its last resting-place in the ground. The former occupant had left it before it was buried. *Not the real home.*

We do well to care for the grave because the body which we placed therein was once a part of one whom we knew and loved, and was the instrument through which all of his communications with us were carried on. Then, too, it was, to some extent, the pattern of a body in which we hope to see him hereafter. But at present he has no connection with what was, during his earthly life, the material part of his nature. That abides in the earth. The person to whom it belonged has either perished in death, or else, as there is satisfactory reason to believe, he has entered another and an entirely different realm.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST RITES

FOR a long period it was customary in England to toll the church bell when a person in the vicinity was dying. It is thought that this was done for the double purpose of affording pious people an opportunity to pray for the peace of the departing soul and of frightening away the evil spirits which were supposed to be hovering around the bed of death. After a time this plan was discarded, but the bell was tolled soon after a death had occurred. This method of showing respect for the dead, and of informing the community that one who had dwelt in the vicinity had passed away, long prevailed in this country. It necessarily fell into disuse in large centres of population, and was gradually discontinued in the smaller towns and villages. In rural districts, however, the custom was observed until a very recent period and may still persist in some localities.

The method followed was not the same in all places. In some sections the bell was struck once or twice per minute for some five minutes. In others it was slowly tolled, giving from twenty to thirty strokes each minute. After a brief interval the person in charge again struck the bell. In some places the number of strokes indicated the sex of the person who had died. In others one stroke was given for each year that the person had lived. In some localities the bell was tolled soon after a death occurred. In others this service was performed early in the morning or at sunset.

It has long been customary to place upon or near the door of the house in which a person had died some emblem which would inform all who passed by that one, who once lived therein, had been called from the world. The Romans often used branches of cypress for this purpose. Other peoples have had special tokens to indicate the presence of death in the home. In our own time and land the custom of placing

The passing bell.

Other methods of notification.

crape upon the door of the home, and, in the case of people of prominence, of draping the office or place of business, is too common to need description. Flowers, too, are sometimes used.

Among the Irish, and formerly in Scotland, it was for a long time customary for a large number of the friends to gather at the late home and watch all night with the body of the dead. Loud wailings and lamentations were uttered, and there was more or less drinking. It is thought that this service, which is called a wake, originated in a fear that evil spirits would injure or carry away the body, though it was continued long after this superstition was generally dispelled. During the past half century, however, its observance has greatly declined.

It was also common for members of other religious denominations to have one or two neighbors watch with the dead body at night, and it is probable that this custom is still continued in many country districts in which it is not convenient to secure the aid of an undertaker. In such cases it is often desirable to keep the face wet with a solution which will retard decomposition and prevent a marked change in the appearance of the features. This service was attended to by the watchers, who also rendered whatever aid they could to the afflicted family, and whose mere presence in the house at such a time was often a great relief to people living in thinly settled localities.

From early times it has been customary to observe various forms and ceremonies before and at the time of the interment or cremation of the dead body. These ceremonies have sometimes been very plain and simple. In other cases they have been showy and elaborate. To be deprived of all funeral rites has been regarded as a great evil. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans the punishment of certain classes of criminals was increased by a decree that no ceremonies should be performed after the sentence of death had been executed. Among all civilized nations, and particularly among religious people, neglect to hold some kind of a funeral service has usually been regarded as a great disrespect to the dead.

The major part of the funeral ceremonies are performed during the interval between death and the close of the services attending the final disposition of the remains. In hot climates

burial, or some other method of removing the body from sight, is necessarily practiced much sooner after death than it is required in cooler regions, though, with a few exceptions, no uniform period is observed over any large extent of country. Some of the ancient nations were governed in this matter partly by the rank of the deceased. In our own times the funerals of distinguished people are sometimes delayed longer than are those for private individuals, but the holding of memorial services upon some succeeding Sabbath, or anniversary, seems to be superseding this practice. The time of observance is largely a matter of convenience, though like many other affairs in which communities as well as individuals and families are interested, it is subject to changes of custom, the reasons for which are not always apparent. In many cases, too, it depends somewhat upon the character of the disease from which the person died and of the means, if any, which are taken to retard the process of decomposition of the body.

Among the Hindus ancient customs still prevail to a great extent. When a person dies the relatives and friends are promptly summoned to the house in which the death has occurred. They immediately procure the few materials which are needed and take entire charge of preparations for the funeral. Whenever possible a son of the deceased is an active participant in the ceremonies. If there is no son another person is selected and, with various formalities, is set apart to represent the relationship. When a son is living but cannot be present, some male relative must act in his stead. While the body is being prepared for removal, a priest recites appropriate hymns from the Vedas, the sacred books of the Hindus. When the preparations are completed, the body is put upon a bier and a lighted lamp is placed where it had lain since death occurred.

Friends then carry the bier to the spot where the body is to be burned. The son, or the person who represents him, leads the procession, and carries a small earthen pot in which the sacred fire with which the pile is to be ignited is burning. The pile is quickly constructed by the relatives and friends who have accompanied the remains. As the body is being placed in position for burning, sacred hymns are repeated and prayers are offered. After he has walked around it three times, the son, or

chief mourner, sets fire to the pile. All who are present at the ceremony remain until the body is consumed, usually about three hours. Then in the name of the deceased each pours some water on the spot, after which they bathe, visit the late residence of the departed to see the lamp which they had left burning therein, and in a short time proceed to their homes.

When burial instead of cremation was practiced, the body was prepared in a manner similar to that described, and religious rites were performed. Relatives and friends went to the place of burial, where still further services were held. The following extract is from a prayer which it was customary to repeat at the grave: "Open thyself, O earth! Be accessible to the dead! As a mother covereth her son with a garment, so cover him, O ground!"

Among the Parsees preparations for the funeral are commenced when it is found that death must soon occur. The body of the dying person is washed and dressed in clean garments. Prayers are offered and texts from the sacred books are recited. If the dying one is unable to join in this service, he is represented by a near relative. When life departs, the body is laid upon a stone which has been placed in readiness on the floor. Women remain as watchers near the body.

The Parsee form.

If death occurs in the daytime the body is removed before the sun goes down. If in the night, the removal is delayed until the next morning. When the time for the funeral arrives, the body is placed upon an iron bier, and two priests preach to and exhort the mourners. At the conclusion of their remarks a white shroud is placed over the body, which the bearers then carry to the Towers of Silence. The procession moves on foot, and when near its destination halts at a low building, which is open upon all sides, in which prayers for the dead are offered and various other religious services are performed. The face of the dead person is then uncovered in order that those in attendance may look upon it for the last time. It is soon covered, and the bearers carry the body into a tower, where it is left to be consumed by the birds of prey which abound in the vicinity. After washing their hands and faces the priests and mourners pray for the soul of the deceased and then return to their homes.

In ancient Egypt after the body was embalmed it was brought

before forty-two judges, or "assessors," of the dead, who carefully inquired concerning the life of the deceased and heard testimony, both for and against him, that any one chose to offer. Each of these judges took note of a special sin. Consequently, defense had to be made upon forty-two different points. If it was decided that the deceased person had lived a bad life the burial of his body in the public place for interments was denied. If the life had been pure the desired permission for burial was given. The body was then placed upon a funeral barge and rowed across the lake which lay between the city and the cemetery. All this was symbolical of what was supposed to take place in the spiritual world in which Osiris was the supreme judge of the dead.

*Egyptian
ceremonials.*

It is a custom of the Mohammedans to send for a religious teacher when death appears to be close at hand. Upon his arrival he reads aloud from the Koran concerning the resurrection. In some cases those who are attending the dying person also read selections from the same book.

*Among the
Mohammedans.*

When death occurs the mouth is closed, the great toes are tied together, and the air of the room is purified by the burning of incense. The body is washed and enveloped in a shroud. While these things are being done various ceremonies are performed. The poorer people are buried simply in a shroud, but the bodies of wealthy people are inclosed in coffins. The body is placed so that the face will look in the direction of Mecca. Several creeds are recited at the grave, and after the burial is completed prayers are offered for the dead.

The funerals of the early Jews were attended by relatives and friends who made many and long-continued lamentations. In common with other ancient peoples they also hired professional mourners. When a distinguished person was buried a poem was recited or an oration was made in some public place.

Jewish funerals.

The ancient Greeks and Romans held public services in honor of their dead. The Roman ceremonials were elaborate and imposing. An invitation to attend the funeral was sent out by a herald. The procession to the grave was led by musicians, behind whom came many hired mourners. The body was followed by the relatives of the de-

*Greek and Roman
services.*

ceased. In many cases these relatives wore masks resembling their illustrious ancestors. Thus they endeavored to bring the glory of the past into close connection with the present, and indicated a firm belief in the continued existence of the family and the state. Both Greeks and Romans had orations and various elaborate ceremonies at, or immediately following, the funerals of their rulers and eminent men. Public games, athletic sports, and even contests of gladiators, were not uncommon upon such occasions.

An early and long-observed custom among various nations was the offering of sacrifices of animals, and often of human beings, when funeral services were held. In the cases of savage and barbarous races these offerings *Sacrifices, songs, and feasts.* were probably made in the belief that thereby the departed would be provided with servants and companions in the land to which they had gone. When followed by more civilized peoples the sacrifices were, in part at least, made as a mark of respect to the dead, though there was, doubtless, also a feeling that in some way they would be of practical benefit to the deceased. The Romans seem to have regarded their ancestors as gods, and the sacrifices and offerings which they made at the grave or tomb probably had a higher meaning than has sometimes been credited to them. The Greeks, also, appear to have attached a religious significance to their funeral sacrifices. They not only provided offerings and libations at the time of the funeral, but it is said that on anniversary days they "paid their devotions to the dead."

At various times and among different peoples it has been customary to follow the dead to their last resting-place with songs. The reason for this simulation of joy, where sorrow must have been the dominant sentiment of the heart, is to be found in a form of belief which these people held in regard to the condition of the soul immediately after death. It was supposed that the mourning of friends upon earth would be a source of grief to the departed, while singing and demonstrations of peace and comfort on the part of the survivors would enhance the joy of the spirit in its new abode.

The feasts which from early times and in many countries have followed funeral services seem originally to have been made partly for the benefit of the dead. Frequently a banquet was

held at the house of a near relative, and a supply of food was placed upon the grave or tomb of the deceased. In various European countries it was customary until a quite recent period to provide a feast of which the relatives and friends partook soon after the burial. When distinguished or very wealthy people died these entertainments were often marked by great extravagance. On a more limited scale than was common in England and Scotland this custom was observed in some parts of the United States for a long period, and there are probably many communities in which it is not yet wholly extinct.

In the early days of Christianity the dead body was carefully prepared for burial. The funeral services were held at night.

Early Christian customs.

This time was probably chosen in deference to the belief of their pagan neighbors that the carrying of a body out of doors when the sun was shining would make the air impure. The rites while not lacking in solemnity were entirely free from gloom. Even in times of extreme peril from persecution, when the survivors were threatened with torture and death, the funeral exercises were of an almost cheerful nature. This, because the Christians of that time regarded death as merely a sleep which opened the way to a new life. In their view the departed had not perished but had entered upon a higher and better state of existence than they had or could have had on earth. Death was not considered an enemy, but was looked upon as a kind and helpful friend. The body was followed to the grave by Christians of all ages, who carried torches and sang psalms and hymns. When the body of one of the great leaders of their faith was to be buried the procession moved in an orderly manner, but "with lights and songs," and with solemn joy, as though they were celebrating the triumph of him who had died.

In pagan lands the form of service which is observed at the burial or cremation of the dead body very closely resembles

Modern funerals.

that which has prevailed in the ages that have passed. In Christian countries there is a considerable difference as to details, but the main features of the ceremony have a very close resemblance.

Wherever the doctrines of the Christian religion are made the rule of life and practice, the body is carefully prepared for its final disposition, and religious services are held before it is

removed forever from human sight. Members of the Roman Catholic church place a crucifix in the hand or at the feet of the dead as soon as life is extinct, but Protestants do not observe any special rites at this time. The body is usually cared for by an undertaker, or, as is sometimes necessary in sparsely settled localities, by friends of the afflicted family. Before the time appointed for the funeral arrives it is covered with a shroud or dressed in clothing similar to that which was worn during life.

The funeral service is often attended at the house in which the deceased had lived, though in a great number of cases it is held in the church which the individual had attended or with which some members of the family are connected. This service may be simple or elaborate as the particular circumstances of the occasion may require. In all cases selections from the Scriptures are read and prayer is offered. Often hymns are sung, and sometimes there is instrumental music. Many pastors preach a sermon appropriate to the occasion. Others make a brief address. Not infrequently the remarks are largely in the nature of a eulogy of the deceased. In some denominations there is a prescribed form for conducting the exercises.

When the service is closed the remains are viewed by the friends and relatives. The coffin is then placed in a hearse, which is generally of a deep black color, though for infants and young children a white one is used in some localities, and taken to the cemetery. The relatives, and often many acquaintances, follow in carriages provided for the purpose.

At the grave the services are usually brief. Here, also, some denominations have a form which is more elaborate than are those which are followed by churches which do not use a ritual. Some Masonic societies and other secret organizations have elaborate and imposing ceremonies at the burial of their members. *Services in the cemetery.*

When the procession has reached the place of interment the relatives and friends gather around the open grave. Four bearers then gently lower the body to its last resting-place. In some forms of service a little earth is thrown upon the coffin, and the minister recites a form in which those present commit the "body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Many who conduct funeral services do not throw earth

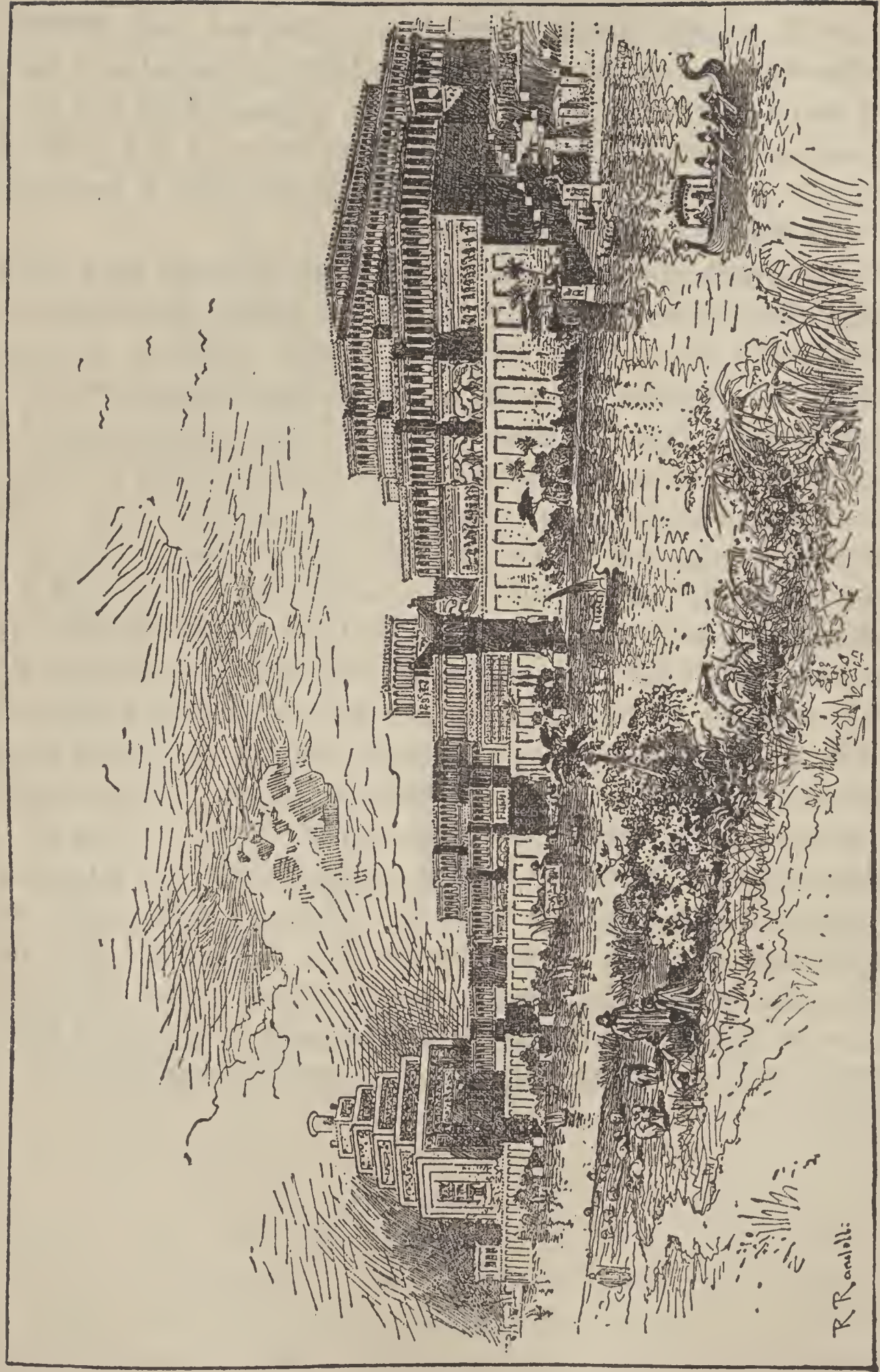
into the grave, and do not make the formal commitment of the body until just before the benediction is pronounced. There are various forms employed in these parts of the service. One of the sweetest and most impressive that I ever heard was used by a beloved pastor and friend, in the days of my boyhood, who long since passed away. As nearly as I can recall after the lapse of many years, it was as follows: "And now we commit the body of our departed friend to the grave to await the resurrection. May 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,' be and abide with us all, and especially with these mourners, forever. Amen."

Symbols of mourning. It has from the earliest times been common for those from whom relatives had been taken by death to make some outward manifestation of their grief. The customs of different peoples have, however, varied as widely in this respect as they have regarding any other matters pertaining to death. In the East it was common to put dust or ashes on the head, to beat the breast and rend the garments, and tear or shave the hair or beard. Sackcloth was often worn, and loud cries were made. The Jews were forbidden to disfigure their faces, as many of the neighboring nations were accustomed to do, but they made loud lamentations and continued their mourning for seven days. In the cases of distinguished men the mourning ceremonies were observed for thirty days. The Greeks cut off the hair, and sometimes the beard, put on coarse garments made of some black material, and remained in seclusion for from ten to thirty days after the death of a near relative. The Romans also put on mourning garments when a death occurred in their families. These were worn only a few days by the men, but the women continued to dress in mourning much longer.

In modern times mourning garments of various forms and shades, which are largely determined by the relationship of the bereaved to the deceased, are worn in all countries that can lay claim to civilization. The length of time which the mourning clothes are worn also depends upon whether a near or a distant relative has died. The particular color which is chosen as an emblem of sorrow varies from white, which is worn in China, to a deep black, which is used in the United States and some European countries.

In many localities the wearing of mourning garments has been carried to a great excess. It involves an expense which many families can ill afford, and in not a few instances it causes great hardship. Respect and affection for the dead can be just as fully exhibited in a simpler and a more tasteful manner. In some places there is a marked tendency toward a far less rigid observance of the custom of wearing "the trappings and the suits of woe" for a long period after the death of a near relative. *Too freely displayed.*

While much may be said on the score of taste and expense against the excessive use of garments which are designed to indicate that the wearer has been deeply afflicted, the greatest objection to such a course by Christian people is to be found in the fact that it is entirely out of harmony with the principles of the religion which they profess. It is true that no degree of piety can or should keep us from mourning when our dear ones are called away. Not to feel sorrow at such a time would be as foreign to the spirit and teachings of Christ as it would be to the common sentiments of humanity. Neither is the outward manifestation of sorrow in a seemly manner to be condemned. But wild and unrestrained exhibitions of grief, and indications of utter woe, do not seem to be consistent with the faith of the Christian. He is counseled not to sorrow "even as the rest, which have no hope." He believes that the friends who have died in faith are at rest with the Saviour, and that ere long he will meet them again, to be parted from them no more by death. This faith should so sustain the soul in the time of bereavement as not only to give comfort to those who mourn, but it should also enable them to exhibit to the world the helpful and hopeful spirit of the religion of Christ. *Not consistent with religion.*



THE MAGNIFICENT EARTHLY HOME OF AN ASSYRIAN KING.

PART II

THE RELATION OF DEATH TO EXISTENCE

CHAPTER IX

THE QUESTION OF THE AGES

IN preceding chapters some of the causes and effects of physical death have been described. We have seen that when life departs, the body, in which and through which its power had been manifested, falls into decay. The process of its dissolution may be delayed, but it cannot be prevented. Sooner or later the body will be separated into the various elements of which it has been formed. In the hour of death the doom of the earthly tabernacle is sealed. *The body destroyed.*

As we look upon the ruin which death has wrought, we ask ourselves if this is the final chapter in the history of the individual by whose silent and helpless form we stand. We wonder if from this great wreck of humanity anything has been or can be saved. And as we think of our own fate, and realize that we too must die, we are still more profoundly moved. The question of where we shall be, if anywhere, after our bodies are still in death, is one which we must consider. It may not be a pleasant topic, and we may try to keep it from our minds, but at more or less frequent intervals it will force itself upon our attention. *The great problem.*

In the presence of the dead we are brought face to face with the great problem which men in all ages have endeavored to solve. It is stated in various ways, but its meaning is the same everywhere. It is one and the same thought, whether it is expressed in the question of the ancient patriarch, "If a man die, shall he live again?" or uttered in the language of the modern investigator who asks, "Does death end all?" It has the same

deep meaning when asked, perhaps in signs or in broken language, by savage and barbarous peoples as it does when it engages the attention of the most cultivated and refined inhabitants of the earth. It is a frequent subject of thought with those whose mental powers are but slightly developed as well as with those who have been highly educated. It does not depend upon culture or piety, but is something that naturally and persistently forces itself upon the minds of men. Perhaps it would be too much to claim that it has been absolutely universal, for there may have been individual exceptions; but it is not going beyond the truth to say that the desire for knowledge regarding the condition of man after his body is dead has been common to all races and all times.

It is not at all strange that men are anxious to learn whether those whom they have known and loved on earth, and whose bodies they have laid in the grave, still survive.

An important question.

Love does not perish with the death of the object of affection. However deep our interest in the living may be, we cannot and we should not forget our dead. Then, too, the question concerning the fate of the departed has the deepest possible personal significance. For what has, in this respect, befallen them will surely befall ourselves. If their life persists we shall live beyond the grave. If they have perished we, too, shall be blotted out of existence when we die. So the question of what really occurs at death, and what, if anything, follows the cessation of life, is one of vast importance. It will make an immense, and perhaps an infinite, difference with each and every individual whether all life ends when the body dies, or whether the death of the physical man is only an event through which the real person passes without being destroyed.

The body, we know, must perish. It is a solemn fact, but it is absolute and irrevocable. Nothing is to be gained by attempting to put the thought from our minds. It may not be pleasant, but it certainly is true. Yet though it seems so important, the destruction of the body is of but the slightest moment as compared with the effect which death will have upon the personal existence.

In our consideration of the effect of death upon the human being we have seen the most striking indications that it is utterly destructive. As far as merely human investigation can demon-



ARCH OF TITUS AND COLISEUM, ROME.

strate, the wreck can never be repaired. The body, as such, certainly passes out of existence. No human power can prevent its decay. Unless it is artificially preserved *Apparently the end.* it soon yields to the destructive forces by which it is at once assailed when life becomes extinct. Even with the utmost care it can be kept intact for only a very limited period. And when embalmed in the most perfect manner possible, though the mummy may be kept for thousands of years, it will crumble into dust in a short time after it is exposed to the air. Even in this case only a part of the body is preserved. The most quickly perishable portions are removed during the process of embalming. Do what we will to prevent it, the body will eventually be separated into its simple elements. Then, in the natural order of things, these elements will pass into new combinations. In the process of time the substance of which human bodies were formed may become parts of trees or plants, or may even enter into animal organizations. As far as our senses can discern, death brings extinction of the personal existence.

Some years ago Bishop Foster was severely criticised by many religious people for the statement that "truth demands that we should make the confession that we do not know that death does not end all." But he only *Positive proof wanting.* embodied in that single sentence the results of careful and long-continued study of the subject upon which he was speaking. Other equally able and conscientious students, men who, like himself, have had faith in God and who firmly believed in a future life for man, have reached the same conclusion. And though new indications that there is a life beyond are being brought to light by the researches of scientists and the investigations of philosophers, it still remains true that absolute proof that life persists beyond the grave has not been obtained. On the other hand it must be said that there is also a want of proof that life does not continue after the body is destroyed. The influence of death upon the higher nature of man is one of those matters which are not susceptible of proof in the way and to the extent to which we can prove things with which we come into direct contact, and concerning which we can obtain definite knowledge. The subject lies upon another plane, and is governed by widely different conditions from those which control in material affairs.

Though it must be admitted that we have no absolute proof that life is continued after death occurs, there is a degree of probability, that practically amounts to a certainty, *A sufficient degree of probability.* that such is the case. This is a conclusion to which many who have studied the subject in all of its bearings have come. It is true that in part we have to walk by faith rather than by sight. But it is not infrequently the case that faith is the safer guide. Our bodily senses often deceive us as to matters in the physical world. Even in this lower sphere we have to make constant use of faith in order that we may arrive at the truth. In the higher realm our spiritual perceptions may be, and probably are, much more reliable than is the testimony of our bodily organs concerning matters in the world around us. Reasoning from what we know, we are led to believe in a future life. The evidences are varied and, when combined, are convincing. The probabilities are overwhelming. We need not hesitate to affirm that man lives beyond the grave.

CHAPTER X

COMMON BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE

IN all ages and among all the various tribes and races of men the belief has been common that death does not involve the destruction of the human being. The form of this belief has varied greatly. There has also been a ^{*Generally accepted.*} great difference in the degree of clearness and tenacity with which the opinion has been held. But it would not be claiming too much to say that such a hope — probably we might safely say such a belief — has been common to the race.

This belief is very largely intuitive. Multitudes of people who have had no direct revelation and no system of philosophy, and who have known nothing of civilization, have had an expectation that after the death of the body ^{*An intuitive belief.*} the real person would exist, in another place and in a different form, but just as truly as he ever lived upon the earth.

It has been said that communities have been found in which the people had no conception of a state of existence after death. The claim has also been made that where a belief in a future life has been held by savage tribes it was not intuitive, but had either been handed down by ancestors who had received a direct revelation, or else had been gradually developed during a long period of time.

The weight of evidence seems to be strongly against the first of these conclusions. In some instances a more intimate acquaintance with the tribes which were supposed to be without the idea of a future life has proved that the first impression was wholly erroneous. It is probable that further investigation would lead to a similar change of opinion in other cases. But even if it could be shown that there are tribes who now have no religious ideas, it would not follow that they never had a belief in a future existence of the soul. History shows that various peoples have declined in power and intelligence. It is not impossible that they have lost certain forms of religious beliefs.

It is probable that with the lower races who now believe in a future life the idea is partly intuitive and partly inherited. It is reasonable to suppose that some dim conception of this great truth might come to the mind of the savage as he looked upon the form of a dead companion and wondered what would be the outcome of the great change which death had wrought. And it is not impossible that in some cases the belief is a survival of an idea which has been handed down from an early period in the history of man upon the earth, but which has been losing its influence as the ages have passed by. This seems to be far more probable than the theory that the belief has been increasing in strength. If there had been a development of such a grand idea as the existence of the soul after its separation from the body, it would certainly have been accompanied by a marked degree of progress in other directions along which no change for the better can be discerned.

There is convincing evidence that various prehistoric races believed in the continued existence of the individual who had come under the power of death. They had various customs which can be explained in no other way. They not only buried the body, but they placed on or near the grave articles which the deceased had owned during life, and which the survivors supposed might be useful to him in his new home. The custom of trepanning, which was common among some of these peoples, also indicated a belief in a life to come.

The savage races of whose customs we have obtained definite knowledge have, like those of the present day, looked forward to a life after death. The views of these people are in many cases vague and almost childish, and they vary a great deal as to details, but there is a general agreement upon the main point that death, under ordinary circumstances, does not annihilate the human being.

When a chief died his wives were slain, in order that they might bear him company in the place to which he had gone. Slaves and animals were also killed, so that he could command their services, as he had done before his death. Some of the African tribes lived in great fear that departed spirits would return to earth and cause them trouble. It is said that in some cases this fear has been so great as to lead them to throw the dead into the water in hope of drowning both body and soul.

The numerous tribes of North American Indians, while varying somewhat as to minor points, were fully convinced that the end of human existence was not reached at death. And so, almost without exception, we might name all savage races as believers in a future life.

Among the nations of antiquity the Egyptians easily held the foremost place. Their learning far surpassed that of any of their contemporaries, and some of their works are even now among the wonders of the world. We *The ancient Egyptians.* have seen that they paid a great deal of attention to the preservation of the body. Apparently this was not on account of any reverence for the body itself, but because of a belief that the former tenant of that body had not perished, but had merely vacated his habitation for a time, and that he would eventually return to it again. Other explanations for their remarkable solicitude for the preservation of the body have been offered, but this seems to be the most probable reason. There can be no doubt that this ancient people had a firm belief that life was not wholly extinguished by physical death.

In the splendid literature of ancient Greece much will be found that relates to the destiny of man after death. From an intellectual standpoint the writings of this people represent a very high degree of culture. The phi- *The Greeks.* losophers gave a great deal of thought to the effect of death upon the individual, and it is probable that they treated the subject as clearly and effectively as it could be presented by the human mind that had not been illuminated by a direct revelation from God.

The origin of the system of religion held by this ancient people is obscure, and the sources from which their leading ideas were derived are uncertain. Whether, as was once thought to be the case, the principles of their faith were largely learned from the Egyptians and other nations, cannot be positively affirmed or denied, but the results of modern investigation make it probable that in the development of their religious opinions far more is due to the Greeks themselves than to all foreign influences combined.

The Greek ideas of the hereafter passed through various changes. In this respect the case was not at all peculiar. No intelligent people can rest contented with their first conclusions

regarding any important subject. As knowledge increases and progress is made, there will be a development of religious belief. The old ideas will be modified by the new views of truth. The one remarkable thing about the change in the belief of the Greeks was that as time progressed the doctrine of a future life became clearer and purer, instead of being overlaid with a mass of wonderful details and superstitious fancies, as was the case with various other ancient faiths.

In the early history of the Greeks, interest centred in the present life. Although it brought many trials and disappointments, and numerous evils were inseparable from it, there was a feeling that it was better than the condition by which it would be followed. Whatever happiness man was to secure must be obtained in this world. Man would survive death, but the form of his existence in the future would be far inferior to that of the present life. At a later period somewhat more hopeful views were expressed by poets and philosophers, and obtained some degree of favor with the common people. The doctrine of rewards and punishments for the deeds of the present life became increasingly prominent, and the superiority of the soul to the body was indicated more clearly and forcibly than before. The future life was described as more real than it had formerly been pictured, and departed spirits were supposed to be able to engage in various activities from which the earlier description of their condition represented them as debarred. Yet even then there was little to attract the man who was about to leave the world. The highest culture was able to give only a faltering hope that active and intelligent existence would continue after death. But this it did supply; and while it is not conclusive, the fact that with such a cheerless view of the hereafter this cultured race did not cease to hope for and to expect some kind of a life beyond the grave must have weight in favor of the proposition that death does not end all.

The Romans also looked forward to a future life. In many respects their ideas upon the subject of death and its effect upon the individual closely resembled those of the
The Romans. Greeks. Cicero, who treated the matter more thoroughly than any other ancient writer, presents many reasons for believing that the soul does not perish with the body. He notes the fact that much that men do here and now has

reference to a period beyond the bounds of the present life, and pertinently asks : " What signify descendants, a famous name, the adoption of children, solicitude about the disposal of money, monuments on graves, panegyrics on the dead, if we do not think of the future ? " Seneca and various other eminent writers also looked for a continuance of life beyond the grave. But this belief was not universal among either the philosophers or the common people. It is probable, however, that the great majority had at least a hope that life would persist. Yet, as was the case with the Greeks, existence in the future was often pictured as far less real and pleasant than life in this world.

The fact that so many peoples, widely different in many other respects, ranging from the rude savage to the polished Greek, and the ignorant barbarian to the learned Roman, have looked with a considerable degree of hope and expectation for a future life, goes far to prove that such a life is a reality. These peoples did not have, and did not claim to have, a direct revelation. Their opinion concerning the future must have been developed largely from within. In many cases it could not have been imparted by other peoples, for those who held this view had not been in contact with races that were better informed than themselves. It seems impossible to escape the conviction that the idea of a future life must have been implanted in their minds and hearts by the Creator. But whatever its origin, it is certain that the vast majority of men in all the ages have cherished a belief that they would not perish at death. And this fact is strong presumptive evidence that the close of human life upon earth does not mark the end of personal existence.

*A strong
argument.*

CHAPTER XI

LEADING ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

AMONG the religions of the Eastern world that of the Hindus is entitled to the first rank. In their sacred literature, which dates back some three thousand years, we find, at that early period, ample evidence that they expected existence to continue after the body had perished. This belief was held in a different and a much simpler form than the one which prevailed at a later period, which is set forth in their more recent writings, and is accepted by Buddhists of the present day. Whether it was supposed that the new life would be without end, and what were to be the particular conditions under which it was to be passed, cannot be determined. It is certain, however, that in the early days of this religion a real, personal existence after death was fully expected. There are some indications of a belief that those whose lives upon the earth had been good were to be happy, while the wicked were to be confined in some dark abode. This view was not very clearly defined at first, but at a later stage in the development of the religious system of which it formed a part it became quite pronounced.

In process of time the exuberant Hindu imagination built a wonderfully complicated superstructure upon the simple foundation of the original belief. The old-time faith in a future life remained unshaken, but there was a gradual development of the idea that in order to insure happiness after leaving the body it was necessary to obtain a certain degree of knowledge, to offer sacrifices, and perform various other religious works.

The theory of reincarnation, or transmigration of souls, came into the religious system of the Hindus long after the earliest hymns of the Vedas, their sacred books, were composed. In the original form of this faith there were neither temples nor idols. Life was profoundly peaceful, and the thought of death

did not occasion fear. In one of these hymns the idea of a place of happiness for the good, and a desire to reach that abode of souls, is expressed in the following lines:—

“Where glory never-fading is, where is the world of heavenly light,
The world of immortality, — the everlasting, — set me there !

.
Where pleasures and enjoyments are, where bliss and raptures ne’er take flight,
Where all desires are satisfied, — oh, make me but immortal there !”

In later days this hope of peace and rest beyond the grave became sadly obscured. The idea of a continuance of existence was retained, but existence itself came to be regarded as the greatest of evils. It was an evil, too, from which escape was almost impossible. From a religion of hope the Hindu faith was changed to a system which brought its adherents to the borderland of despair.

The ancient Persians, a powerful and progressive people, had a firm belief in a future life. About many things concerning their faith there is much obscurity. Between the period in which the system had its origin and the present time, great changes in doctrine, which in a general way are credited to Zoroaster, have been made. But while there is some doubt as to various other points of the early belief, there is no uncertainty whatever regarding the views that were entertained upon the subject of a continuation of the personal existence after death.

Like the early Hindus, the Parsees, as the adherents of this system were called, did not erect temples and had no idol worship. The common belief that they were fire worshipers appears to have been erroneous. They did, however, regard fire as a pure and sacred element. It was kept constantly burning in certain specified places where worshipers were gathered, and even now is never allowed to go out. When he prays the Parsee turns his face toward the light of the sun or the fire. If the latter, he approaches the flame with his face covered, in order that it may not be defiled by his breath.

While the Parsee believed in a continued life beyond the grave for all men, he made a marked distinction between the condition of those whose lives had been good and those whose conduct had been evil. The good passed at once to an abode of happiness, and the wicked were immediately consigned to a

place of misery. Those in whom good and evil were so mingled as to make them unfit to associate with the pure, while not appearing to deserve the condemnation passed upon the utterly vile, were supposed to go to an intermediate place. This was not to be their final home, but only a place of detention in which they were to remain until their souls were purified by the discipline to which they were subjected. It was supposed that the conflict between the good and the evil forces of the universe would eventually terminate in the overthrow of all that was wrong, and that when the great consummation was reached the souls of all men would be gathered into a happy home.

It would naturally be supposed that the Hebrews would have had a clearer view and a stronger hope of a future life than any of the other nations of early times. Their relations to a personal God were so close, and the exhibitions of His goodness and power were so numerous and so varied, that it is difficult to understand how they could imagine that He who watched over them so patiently, and cared for them so constantly in life, would desert them at the hour of death. But it must be admitted that they did not regard the state of good men who had passed away from the earth with nearly as much of hope and confidence as did the ancient Hindus and Parsees.

It is not probable that the Hebrews expected that the soul would utterly perish at death. They looked for a continuance of being, but the conditions under which they expected to exist were far from attractive. Like many of the Greeks and Romans they thought of everything in the future state as dim, and shadowy, and unreal. There would be life, but that life would be destitute of joy. The new abode would be dark, silent, and gloomy. There would be no activity and no satisfaction. In their opinion there was no distinction between the good and the wicked. All went to a common home. No rewards were given and no punishments were inflicted. As compared with the life on earth, existence in the realm of the departed was weak and worthless.

While this was the general idea which the masses of the early Hebrews entertained regarding the conditions of existence after death, it is safe to assume that many, in all, had a much clearer vision of the destiny of the departed soul. The ancient worthies

who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar," must have supposed that a life of blessedness awaited them beyond the grave. And there can be little doubt that as time passed away, and revelation became fuller and clearer, the better classes of the Hebrew people came to regard the new existence as far more desirable than it had appeared to those who lived at an early period in the history of the world. While their light was dim as compared with that of the present day, it must have greatly brightened the previous outlook upon the future life.

In point of numbers the Mohammedan religion ranks with the great faiths of the world. For hundreds of years it was by far the most aggressive of all forms of belief, and its doctrines are now held with a degree of tenacity that *Mohammedan opinion.* is not exceeded by the constancy of the adherents of any other system. But while it is an extremely important factor both in the religious and the political world, it does not yield a great amount of additional information concerning the opinions of the ancient peoples of the Eastern world upon the fate of man after death. This is not because of any obscurity in the statement of doctrine regarding the future life, but is due to the facts that it is a comparatively new system, and that its principles were very largely borrowed from forms of religion which had previously been established. It is, therefore, as a reinforcement of the views held by the adherents of other great religions, rather than as a statement of ideas which were original with, or developed by, its founder, that Mohammedanism is mentioned in this connection.

In this form of religion there is no doubt as to the continuance of life beyond the grave. Neither is there any question as to rewards and punishments for the deeds done in the body. As to what constitutes right and wrong the Moslem has some very peculiar ideas, but he is firm in the belief that good, as he sees it, will be rewarded by happiness, and that what he regards as wrong will surely bring misery to the soul. Something in the form of an intermediate state is provided in which the good and the wicked will have a foretaste of their future condition. This period is supposed to commence at death and close at the judgment. When it comes to an end the souls of Moslems who have been enduring discipline for their sins will be delivered,

and will enter paradise. All who have not been true believers must return to the various places of punishment to which they have been assigned. No reversal of decisions can be hoped for. Existence will never end. The joy of the saved and the torment of the lost will continue forever.



CHAPEL AND COLUMBARIUM OF CREMATORY, GERMANTOWN, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

CHAPTER XII

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY

FROM its earliest days the Christian church has entertained the belief that death merely changes but does not end existence. This is one of the most vital principles of the faith. *An essential doctrine.* In fact, without this doctrine of a future life Christianity could not exist as a religious system, and there would be no reason why it should exist. Its interest, its influence, and its power all centre in the conviction that there is not only a life after the death of the body but that the future life is of transcendent importance. The brief period spent upon the earth is merely a time of preparation for a vast eternity which lies beyond. It is only the beginning of existence.

No other independent system of belief has ever brought the idea of future existence into anything like the degree of prominence which from the very first it has held in the Christian church and which it must continue to hold *Positive statement.* as long as the church endures. Other forms of religion have stated it with varying degrees of clearness, though but very few, even of those which have borrowed from Christianity, have presented it so completely and so confidently. And no other system has offered a tithe of the evidence which is supplied by the Christian religion to attest the truth of this stupendous claim.

It has already been shown that the idea that life persists after death was not original with Christianity. It was held, vaguely perhaps but truly, by prehistoric races, and has been *Points of difference.* an article of belief in all ages and among all classes and conditions of men. But there are two points in which the Christian view is radically different from the ideas that had prevailed before this system of faith was introduced. One is in regard to the certainty, and the other in respect to the character, of the future life.

Before the coming of Christ into the world the majority of men appear to have hoped, and in some degree to have expected, to live beyond the grave. There were various reasons for sup-

posing that man did not perish at death. But these reasons were not fully convincing. They were indications, but they were not proof. Questions as to the extent of their meaning could not be kept from the mind. Generation after generation passed away and no one returned to demonstrate the fact that death had not proved to be the utter ruin which it seemed. This fact must have caused sad forebodings in the minds of thoughtful men as they looked forward to the time when they too should be called to leave the world.

Even to the chosen people of God the doctrine of a future life was not clearly revealed. The truth did not come in all of its completeness and power, but was given by degrees. In this, as in other respects, revelation has been progressive. Evidences have been multiplied as the ages have passed. The patriarchs had but little light. The prophets had more. But the full revelation of the certainty of a life after death was not completed until Christ had, in His own person, and by His own resurrection, demonstrated the truth of the doctrine which He had plainly taught.

The change which Christianity effected in the views which men held in regard to the kind of life that would be granted beyond the grave was both great and beneficent. While the new system had the most solemn warnings for the wicked, it brought to the good the assurance of a felicity of which they had scarcely dreamed. The new life was represented as altogether different from the shadowy and unreal existence which various peoples had pictured as the condition of the dead. It was to be a cheerful, active, exuberant life, free from care, without weariness and without end.

It is not proposed here to trace the development of the belief in a future life which is part of the religious history of the race, or to present the evidences by which the truth of the doctrine is established. These matters will be reserved for treatment in another part of this work. The design of the brief chapters which have now been presented upon the subject under consideration has been to show that the question of existence after death has been a prominent subject of inquiry by men of all times, and has formed a part, and in many cases a very important part, of the various systems of religion which have prevailed in the world.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MESSAGE OF SCIENCE

THE scientific spirit is now far more active, aggressive, and influential than it has been in any previous age of the world. Not only is science more popular than ever before, but its domain is greatly widening and its conquests are rapidly multiplying with the passing years. Its development both advances and indicates the progress of the human race.

While real science is a powerful aid to humanity, there is a great deal of assertion which is put forth under the name of science which has no just claim to such a designation. Wild theories and vague speculations are sometimes published as the teachings of science, and they find no small number of believers among a class of intelligent people who are attracted by the display of what appears to be scholarship, but who have not the time or the facilities for making independent investigations. Therefore, before attempting to state the attitude of science toward the subject under consideration, it will be well to define its real meaning.

One of the shortest and best definitions of science is "systematized knowledge." It implies a knowledge of many facts which have been verified by observation or by reasoning and arranged in an orderly system. The message of science with which we have to do in this chapter is what the facts which have been discovered and systematically arranged indicate as to the relation of death to existence.

The idea of a future life is essentially of a religious nature. It has its deepest springs in the spiritual rather than in the intellectual faculties of man. In every system of real religion it holds a prominent place. It cannot be eliminated without destroying the entire plan to which it belongs. The more clearly this doctrine is perceived, and the deeper the impression which it makes upon the human heart, the more potent and the more beneficent will be the influence

of the whole system. And because it is so clearly a vital point the opponents of religion have often made it the centre of their attacks.

Much has been said and written about the conflict of science with religion. In fact, the discussion has been so persistent, and at times so acrimonious, that many people have been led to suppose that the claims of the two could not be reconciled. In many cases it has been thought necessary to reject the teachings of one or the other as the alleged discoveries of science were believed to overthrow some of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. In the beginning of the controversy the principal questions at issue related to geography, astronomy, and the age and nature of the earth. It was not till "after the beginning of the present century that the real battle between science and religion took a definite form, or that science assumed a seriously threatening aspect towards the fundamental doctrines of religion."¹ Then the field of attack was greatly extended and a much higher degree of scholarship was brought to bear upon the points in dispute.

The discussion has not always been carried on in a friendly spirit or in a manner which was best calculated to lead to the discovery of the truth. Science has often been aggressive, and some of its brilliant teachers have, at times, appeared to be exceedingly anxious not only to overthrow the superstructure, but to also undermine the foundations of religious belief. On its part, too, the friends of religion have often been too dogmatic and conservative. They have at times refused to believe that the ancient interpretations which they had inherited from their fathers could be erroneous, and have persisted in their support of theories which the plain facts of the natural world proved to be wholly wrong. Thus, instead of being a search for truth, the controversy on both sides often became an effort to sustain previously conceived opinions. Happily, in recent times, the discussion is carried on in a very different manner. It is often keen and sometimes inclines to be arrogant, but the bitterness by which it was so largely characterized in former days is seldom manifested. With but few exceptions really able scientists are respectful to religion and the leading theologians are friendly to science.

¹ T. J. Hudson, *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*.



STATUE OF RAMESES II., THE PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS.

It should be noted in this connection that while the contest between science and religion, or what passed for knowledge and piety, while it has been carried to an extreme, has never been as general as some have been led to suppose. *Not always unfriendly.* At no time have all scientists of the first rank been the enemies of religion, and in modern times, at least, the opposition to science by Christian ministers has not been anything like universal. Though, to a lesser degree, what in this respect is true now has been true in the past. Some of the ablest scientists of the present day are Christians, and not a few of the ablest defenders of the Christian faith are also eminent in the field of science. The former are as reverent investigators as are the latter. Each seek the truth and welcome light from whatever source it may come.

As to the net results of the controversy, which have thus far been secured, different opinions have been expressed. Some of the champions of science claim that many points *Results of the controversy.* have been wrested from religion and that not a single position that has been secured has ever been recaptured by those from whom it was taken. With an equal degree of positiveness many believers in religion assert that the so-called triumphs of science have not caused the slightest loss to the defenders of the faith, though they admit that a great deal of "misdirected zeal in opposing science" has been brought to nought. The latter view appears to be correct. Certain minor claims which were once made in behalf of religion have been found to be untenable, and have been abandoned, but no vital principle has been shaken and Christianity as a system remains unharmed.

It has been a great disappointment to many devout people that science has not been more decisive in its teachings regarding a future life. It has seemed to them that the *Too much expected of science.* great advances which science has made in the material world should have been equaled, or at least approximated, in spiritual affairs. But there are adequate reasons why this has not been the case. In fact it was a great mistake to look to science for any decisive word upon this subject. Perhaps the time will come when it will fully demonstrate the truth of the doctrine of a future life. Some go so far as to claim that recent discoveries have, in addition to the evidence previously secured,

furnished all the proof for which we should ask. This claim, however, is not generally admitted, and the assertion seems to be too sweeping. If there were no proofs except those which are supplied by science, most men would feel that further evidences were highly desirable. What may be the case in the future cannot be affirmed, but in the present condition of science it seems too much to expect that it can, of itself alone, offer a satisfactory degree of proof that existence continues after death.

It is a sound principle that in order to achieve success in any undertaking man must use means which are adapted to serve the purpose which he has in view. He does not use a locomotive in making a watch or study mathematical text-books in learning a foreign language. The rules of algebra are perfect as far as their special purpose is to be served, but they are of no particular benefit to a scholar who is studying geography or history. No one expects to master one branch of learning by giving all of his attention to another department of knowledge. Even though they may appear, when their difficulties have been conquered, to be very closely related, they must be mastered separately. Each has its own laws and must be studied by itself. The same rule applies to the study of science and religion. Though they have much in common, they are not interchangeable. One cannot be substituted for the other.

From the very nature of the case, science should not be expected to demonstrate fully the truth of all the claims of religion. Many of the truths which belong to one lie in a very different plane from those which are occupied by the other. Science, too, has to do with knowledge. Religion is largely occupied with matters of faith. While they overlay each other to some extent, and are interwoven at many points, there is a very large and important field in which they have little or nothing in common. Outside the realm of physical things there is a great domain which science does not enter, and in which the spiritual rules supreme. There is also a vast field of knowledge with which religion is not necessarily concerned. This fact affords an ample explanation of the truth that along many lines science and religion appear to diverge. The study of law does not give, and is not supposed to give, a knowledge of music. This is not at all because the studies are

antagonistic, but because they are radically different in their purposes and their possibilities. In like manner a man may become an adept in science without learning much about personal religion, or he may become a devoted Christian without mastering even the elementary truths of science.

There is a widely prevalent idea that science has practically settled pretty much all the questions with which it has attempted to deal. This is wholly erroneous. Opponents of Christianity have gloried over the minor ^{Science} ^{incomplete.} victories which they have won in their conflict with religion, and many earnest believers have feared that the foundations of their faith were being destroyed. Both parties were either ignorant or forgetful of the fact that science is very far from being infallible. During the past half century it has changed its ground many times, and is still in a wholly unsettled state. The scientist who imagines that Christianity is in danger because some of the claims which were formerly made in its behalf have been proved to be unsound, should consider the question whether the changes in scientific statements have not been even greater than those which have been found necessary for the readjustment of religious creeds. It is certain that if what is accepted as science to-day is correct, very much that passed for science fifty years ago was far from being true. And there is every reason to suppose that new discoveries will make necessary equally radical changes of statement in the future. There is not the slightest degree of probability that the science of the present day has reached, or even approached, its full development. The man who fears to trust the Bible because some of its old interpretations have been found to be incorrect should, for the same reason, decline to believe the teachings of science.

Another point which should be noted in this connection is the fact that the scientists who are opposed to the doctrines of Christianity are not agreed among themselves as to the conclusions which should be drawn from the ^{Scientists not} ^{agreed.} facts which they think have been established. The arguments which are advanced by one class are assailed by another, and the opinions of a third party will not harmonize with those of either of the others. This is not to be wondered at. Men are so differently constituted that they naturally take different

views of the same phenomena. Then, too, some assign much more importance than do others to certain phases of the subjects with which they all have to deal. For this they are not to be condemned. But the fact that there is such a wide variation of opinion upon matters which have been made the objects of close scientific investigation should lead those scientists who are opposed to religion to be more tolerant than they sometimes have been of the opinions of men who do not see their way clear to abandon the old faith and accept the teachings of science in place of the doctrines which have been made known by revelation.

One of the principal grounds upon which a considerable class of scientists oppose the doctrine of a future life is the assumption that the soul and body of man form "an indivisible whole." If their claim is true the idea of an existence after death must, of course, be abandoned. It is plain to every one that the body perishes, and it requires no elaborate process of reasoning to prove that if the soul is merely and only a part of the physical frame it must meet the same fate. So far as the individual existence is concerned, death is the end. For, though matter is indestructible, and the elements of which the man was composed will exist forever, the organism is totally destroyed by death. If this organism comprises the whole man, and there is no soul "separate from the body," nothing can survive. The physical, intellectual, and moral natures are all involved in a common ruin.

Those who accept the theory that the whole man perishes at death assume that the brain, which all admit is the seat of thought and consciousness, and which certainly passes out of existence in the same manner as any other organ of the body, is inseparable from the mind. But assumption is not proof, and no one has proved, or can prove, that the theory is correct. It is a matter of opinion and not of knowledge.

Another class of scientists, and one that is very much larger than that which holds the belief that death ends all, emphatically reject the idea that man has nothing that is superior to, and capable of living apart from, the body. They regard the brain as an instrument of the mind and not as the mind itself. It is the organ through which communication with

*A ground of
opposition.*

*The case not
proved.*

*Favorable
indications.*

the world is effected. It is active when we think, but this does not prove that thought is produced by its "molecular motion," or that it is generated by the brain in any manner. Matter cannot be annihilated, and there is nothing to show that consciousness may not be subject to the same law of persistence. Those who take this view compare man to a musician. The instrument which he uses may be entirely destroyed and yet the player may remain entirely uninjured. So the instrument through which the mind acts may perish and the mind itself continue to exist.

The relation of the body and soul, and the comparative importance of each, has also been happily represented under the figure of a house and its tenant. It is said that when ex-President John Quincy Adams was eighty years old, and in feeble health, he one day met on the street an old friend, who took him by the hand, and said: "Good-morning. And how is John Quincy Adams to-day?" The reply which he received was as follows: "Thank you, John Quincy Adams is well, sir; quite well, I thank you. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundation. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out. Its walls are much shattered, and it trembles with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon. But he himself is quite well, sir; quite well."

There are good reasons for supposing that the figures which have been noted are accurate illustrations of a real condition. It is admitted that these reasons do not rest upon a physical basis. But this should not lead to their rejection. Some of the mightiest forces of the universe are immaterial. No one has ever seen or handled gravitation, yet no intelligent person doubts the existence of this wonderful power. We see its effects, and because we see them we know that this force exists. It is something altogether different from the bodies upon which it acts, but it is just as real as are the material things through which its effects are manifested. So in the human constitution there may be a force that moves and controls the physical frame but which is not of a material origin or nature. While they are not able to describe it fully, or even

to locate it accurately, very many able scientists believe that there is something in man which is widely different from the body, which can exist apart from the physical frame, and which will survive the event of death.

A strong argument in favor of the supposition that life continues after the decay of the physical frame is found in the well-attested physiological fact that the entire body *Gradual destruction of the body.* perishes and is renewed several times during the average term of life, and yet through all these great changes the individual remains uninjured. All through his earthly career he knows himself, and is known by others, to be one and the same person. The destruction of his body is constantly going on, yet it does not in the least degree disturb the man to whom the body belongs. He attends to his business and enjoys his pleasures precisely as he would do if no such change was in progress. The fact that he not only endures this radical and continuous change, but suffers no inconvenience from it, is a strong indication that the real man has an existence that is superior to that of his body and that may be continued after his physical frame has fallen into utter ruin.

Perhaps a still more convincing argument for the persistence of life after death is found in the fact that the sleep of the body, *Life during sleep.* however profound, does not end in the destruction of the individual. The senses may be closed to all impressions, and the man be practically dead to the outer world, yet the life of the soul goes on, and it is probable that some degree of mental activity continues. About one third of the time spent in this world is passed in sleep, but instead of tending to destroy life, the repose thus obtained gives renewed vigor to both body and mind. Fainting, also, and various forms of disease, may cause an entire suspension of the conscious existence, and yet the life of the individual so affected may neither be destroyed nor seriously endangered.

Opponents of the doctrine of a future life insist that the examples which have been cited are not perfect analogies and, *Not perfect analogies.* therefore, are not to be accepted as proofs that death will not destroy the personal existence. This claim must be admitted. The changes which are constantly going on in the body, and which cause its periodical renewal, are effected so slowly and naturally that they do not even in the slightest

degree interfere with the regular order of life. The processes of decay, elimination of worn-out material, and of repair, are not only perfectly natural, but they are really essential to the health of both the body and the mind.

The fact that the existence of the individual is not destroyed by the entire change of the bodily structure, when that change is effected in a manner that is in strict accordance with the laws of his being, does not absolutely prove that it can survive the shock of death. In the one case there is an entire change in the elements of the body but the body itself continues. In the other case the organism is wholly destroyed. And it is not improper to ask whether this total destruction does not extinguish the life which the gradual tearing down and rebuilding of the body allows to continue. The visible effects of the process are certainly very different. And there is the same reason for asking whether the effect of the endless sleep which we call death will not be more destructive to the personality than is temporary withdrawal from activity of the bodily powers during natural repose. We cannot, by the application of any natural laws, demonstrate that such is not the case. Still the indications are reasonably clear that the higher powers of man do not perish when his body dies. If science does not clearly prove that life persists, it certainly does not show that such persistence is impossible. And, really, the question is so far outside of the realm of natural science that we ought not to be disappointed if it returns no definite answer to our inquiry.

Though science does not prove that man continues to live after his body has been placed in the grave, it does show that, during the unnumbered ages which have passed since the material world was formed, a law of progress has been in active operation. The fact that such a law prevails is an important indication that there is a future life. The goal of progress is not destruction, but betterment. And where the law of progress is in force, as science proves it to be in the universe with which we have to do, it is natural to suppose that continued life, rather than perpetual death, will be the outcome of the earthly existence.

Whether the subject is considered from the standpoint of a believer in the literal accuracy of the biblical account of the creation of man, or from that of an evolutionist, there will be found

reason to hope that this law of progress will insure the continuance of human life beyond the bounds of this present world. If God made man in His own image, a perfect being, endowed with great powers and almost limitless possibilities, we cannot resist the conviction that He made him for a more permanent existence than that of earth. If, on the other hand, God has created man by a process of development which has extended over immeasurable periods of time, there is no probability that after bringing him to his present high position in the scale of being, He will allow him to perish at death. It is not to be expected that a law of progress which has made possible the wonderful results which have thus far been achieved will cease its operations when death occurs. It is far more reasonable to suppose that the process of development will continue beyond the grave.

Psychical science, which has to do with the powers and capacities of the human soul, is not yet sufficiently developed to furnish evidence that will be generally accepted as proving beyond all doubt that life persists after death occurs. Still, a great quantity of evidence has been collected, and to many minds it proves sufficiently convincing. Investigations are still being made and further developments of importance are expected.

Information concerning the condition of man after death is often offered by spiritualistic mediums. Some of these mediums are notorious impostors and have been detected in the grossest frauds. Others are excellent persons who have been endowed with great psychical powers, and who are able to do many things which are really wonderful. By the exhibition of these powers the credulous are easily persuaded that they have had communication with the spirits of their departed friends, and have learned a great deal about the circumstances and conditions of life in the unseen world.

While these phenomena are very interesting, it is not from such a source that the most satisfactory evidence regarding the future life is to be obtained. If any absolutely reliable system of doctrine, which is founded upon the results of inquiry and is so complete that it does not need to be fortified by an appeal to the revelations of the Bible, is ever established, it will be developed through the united efforts of educated, alert, and

patient investigators like the members of the London Society for Psychical Research, and various kindred organizations.

In the physical world the field of knowledge is being constantly enlarged. New and wonderful disclosures follow each other with almost bewildering rapidity. The astonishment which is excited by one great discovery is hardly at its height when something still more marvelous attracts the attention and furnishes a new centre of interest. Until a comparatively recent period the spiritual realm has had but little study, as contrasted with the physical universe, from eminent scientists. Doubtless this accounts in part for the fact that our information concerning the one is so much more meagre than it is regarding the other, though it must not be forgotten that the difficulties attending the investigation of spiritual phenomena are vastly greater than are those in which matters pertaining to the material world are involved. It is a cause for rejoicing that many accomplished scientists are now carefully and thoroughly studying various events which appear to have a direct bearing upon the question of a future existence. While a complete demonstration of the doctrine which it seeks to establish may not be made, it is not too much to expect that by means of this investigation a great deal of useful knowledge concerning the powers and capacities of the human soul will be obtained.

Although there is a wide difference in the opinions of scientists upon the possibility of a future life for man, the broad outlook from the purely scientific position is hopeful. *The outlook hopeful.* Some able men hold that science throws no light upon the subject, but they are in a very small minority. A larger number believe that the evidence of science is sufficient to prove that the life which man lives upon the earth is only the beginning of his existence. Then there are those who hold that science leaves the matter in doubt, but who cheerfully admit that there is at least a scientific possibility of a future life.

One of the ablest writers of the day declares that there is "no apparent ground for assuming" that our five senses give us exhaustive knowledge, and adds that "we may be living in a universe of which we really know as little as the mole, which no doubt seems to itself to perceive everything that is perceptible, knows of the world of sight."¹ Another writer, and one whose

¹ Professor Goldwin Smith, *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*.

sympathies seem to be very strongly with science as opposed to theology, says that "there is nothing in Agnosticism to negative the possibility of a future state of existence. Behind the veil there may be anything, and no one can say that individual consciousness may not remain or be restored after death, and that our condition may not be in some way better or worse, according to the use we have made of the opportunities of life."¹

As has already been said, we should not look to science, in the present state of its development, for absolute proof of the doctrine that man outlives death. As far as it goes it seems to corroborate the teaching of revelation. Whatever it has been in the past, at present it is not hostile to religion. The same God who made the universe, with its wonderful laws and adaptations, also gave us the Bible with its great spiritual doctrines. As both came from a Creator who is infinitely wise, we may be sure that, when properly interpreted, they can never be in conflict.

Doubtless it is best that we should walk in part by faith rather than to go wholly by sight. The spiritual nature of man needs development as truly as do the intellectual powers, and, in order that this may be effected, it is necessary that we take some things on trust. The wonders of the universe with which we are acquainted, and the glimpses which we get of things which we can scarcely begin to comprehend, and which grow more and more marvelous as our field of vision is enlarged and our powers of observation are increased, prove that there must be a mighty sovereign in control. This ruler, whom some, like Herbert Spencer, recognize as "an unknown and unknowable power," is by others revered as a God who, though almighty in power, condescends to dwell in the hearts of all His trusting children.

Long ago it was said that "an undevout astronomer is mad." The marvelous revelations which science has given in recent years make still more complete than ever before the proofs of the existence of God. And if we admit that there is a God who has created not only all that we behold but, as reason assures us, infinitely more than we can see, even with the wonderful appliances of modern invention, we can hardly doubt that His purposes with mankind extend beyond this present world. Surely science brings to us a message of hope concerning a future life.

¹ S. Laing, *Modern Science and Modern Thought*.

PART III

THE SPIRITUAL MAN

CHAPTER XIV

THE HUMAN SOUL

As far back as the history of man can be traced we find a belief in his spiritual, as well as his physical, existence. In some more or less distinct form this belief has continued to the present time. It has survived all the vast changes through which the race has passed in its ascent from the primitive condition to the present plane of civilization. Even where progression has been followed by degradation, the idea that man is something more than an animal has not been obliterated. The most careful investigation has shown that the lowest races with which we have any really intimate acquaintance have a belief in spiritual beings,¹ and thus far not a single language has been discovered "which is without a name for soul."²

*Belief in the
existence of a
soul.*

Then, too, in all ages, and among all peoples, there have been outward manifestations of a firmly rooted belief in the existence of the soul. Altars have been erected, temples and synagogues, and mosques and churches, have been builded, often at great personal sacrifice on the part of those by whom they were constructed. And as man increases in knowledge and culture this external evidence of a belief that he is something more than a body, and that he has a destiny that is not bounded by his physical existence, becomes more pronounced. In the great centres of population splendid cathedrals are erected, and all that wealth can obtain to make them magnificent, or art can do to make them beautiful, is secured. And where fewer people are gath-

¹ E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*.

² Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*.

ered, and wealth is less abundant, such edifices as the residents are able to furnish are cheerfully constructed. In all civilized lands they will be found, in rural settlements as well as in cities and towns.

These large investments of money make no return in kind. They are not business ventures. They have nothing in common with the great establishments which men erect for financial benefit. Not only are they costly to construct, but they are maintained at a constant and an enormous expense. They are continued through all political disturbances, their activities are not allowed to cease even when business depression closes the doors of the great industrial works which are designed to increase the wealth of their owners, and even the death of men who are most prominent in the conduct of their affairs is not permitted to cause a break in the round of their operations. These institutions have not been established, and they are not maintained for the purpose of promoting the worldly interests of men, but because they are required by the higher nature, which is known as the human soul.

Various definitions of the soul have been given. Of these, some are inadequate and others are difficult to comprehend.

Definition. For the purpose of this work an exhaustive metaphysical statement is neither necessary nor desirable. Simpler terms will answer better.

In a general way it may be said that the soul includes the mental and the moral natures of man. All the higher and nobler qualities of the individual properly belong to the soul. The term "spirit" is sometimes used instead of "soul," but they are not properly interchangeable. Spirit is the less comprehensive. It may be thought of as having intellect, sensibilities, and will, but without moral attributes. No such conception can be formed of the soul. When we say that the soul has departed from the dead body, we mean that the moral, as well as the intellectual, powers have ceased to exist therein.

Sometimes, however, this order appears to be reversed. Some have thought that the soul was intermediate between the body and the spirit, and would perish at death. By others the soul is regarded as having a closer connection with the body than the spirit occupies, and as comprising the emotional nature but not the will. These views have, to some extent, lost favor in modern

times, and it is now common, though far from universal, to discard any sharp distinction and to consider soul and spirit as differing in function, but as being of the same substance. Perhaps the simple definition of a natural entity "which lives, feels, thinks, and wills," gives as good an idea of what the soul really is as it is possible to express in a concise form.

Although there has, from the earliest times, been an almost universal belief in the existence of the soul, the forms in which this belief has been held have been widely divergent. *A variety of opinions.* This variation has been observed not only in different ages of the world, but also among people of the same age and the same land. Whenever and wherever there has been intellectual activity a great deal of thought has been given to the soul, and this thought has run in many different channels. But in one respect there has been a substantial agreement. Even those who take the very lowest view of the soul, and claim that it is material in its nature, unite with those who hold that it is purely spiritual, as well as with all whose opinions lie between these two extremes, in admitting that it is greatly superior to the relatively gross matter of the body with which, during life in its present form, it is inseparably connected. From this common ground the numerous forms of belief diverge.

In early times the soul, like the body, was supposed to be composed of some material substance. It was thought, however, in the case of the soul, that this substance was *Supposed to be material.* greatly refined and attenuated. And this view has been maintained, not only among peoples that have made but little progress in mental development, but it has been held also by not a few noted philosophers in both ancient and modern times. The Stoics held to the doctrine of a "fine ethereal nature of the material soul." In the early Christian writings there is evidence of a common belief in a "finely attenuated but still material spirit," and at the present time there are many who believe that the soul may be fully described as "the higher and finer activity of our general frame."

In recent times a great deal of latitude has been allowed in the interpretation of the doctrine that the body and the soul are alike in substance. Some have held that the "atoms are endowed with sensation." This form of materialism is so gross as to make man nothing but an animal, and to practically deny

the existence of any principle that is really worthy of the name of soul. Others, and among them are many prominent physiologists and metaphysicians, hold the main principle of the doctrine, but in a much higher form. Spinoza taught that mind and matter are "two attributes of one substance," and Karl Vogt attributed to the functions of the brain and nerves all the phenomena of the soul. Others, like Dr. C. A. Stephens, hold that "the soul is merely cell experience, the knowledge acquired by cells, collectively and individually, during years of hereditary transmission." According to these views the brain and nervous system form the soul, and all of its powers are due to the activity of a finely organized but still material substance.

It is customary to think and speak of the body as undergoing a constant change, while the soul, with the exception of growth and development, remains the same. The *The ever-changing soul.* body which any given person now has, though apparently the same, is not the identical body that he had eight or ten years ago, yet his identity as an individual is usually supposed to have remained unchanged. While the body is transient the soul is believed to be permanent.

There are some who dissent from this view. They hold that the soul, as well as the body, is constantly undergoing changes, and that the individual of to-day is a very different man from the one that he was at an earlier period of his existence. According to this doctrine the soul "consists of impulses, dispositions, and ideas."¹ Our ideas are integral parts of ourselves. Consequently what our ideas are at any given time determines our personality at that moment. These ideas, and therefore the elements of our personality, are not the same at all times, and may be radically different at one period from what they are at another. They vary in intensity and change in character. Memory leads us to think that there is no change in the individual himself. He believes that he has the same soul as he had when he was born, but such a belief is a mental illusion.

This view eliminates the "metaphysical ego-soul," with its enduring personality, and in its place gives us "the real soul of our ideas and ideal aspirations." Its advocates hold that this doctrine of the constantly changing soul is fully sustained by science, and that, though it seems to be utterly subversive of

¹ Dr. Paul Carus, *The Religion of Science*.

generally accepted principles, it "elevates and purifies religion." These claims, however, are not likely to be generally granted either by scientists or by religious teachers.

The doctrine of a changing personality seems to be taught by the exponents of the Buddhist faith. The adherents of this system consider a belief in an immortal soul which can be described as "an undivided, eternal, and indestructible essence, which has only taken its abode temporarily in the body," an error. They believe that at some period, the exact moment of which is determined by various circumstances, the soul that leaves the body in which it has dwelt will appear upon earth in another body or another form, and that with each rebirth there will be a new and perishable personality. Yet the claim is made that, though the consciousness of the ego may change, the true inner being transcends the fleeting phenomena and practically continues to exist. The recurring ego conception is likened to a torch which a wanderer uses for a while in order that he may find a path when he is traveling in the dark, which he then extinguishes, and lights another torch for a later journey.¹ This doctrine is said to be comprehensible to one "who has attained understanding," but it is certainly very difficult for one who is not versed in the occult philosophy of the East to master. It is hardly too much to say that to the ordinary mind it is unintelligible.

That the soul changes along the line of development no one will deny. It should grow stronger and better with every passing day. It has great possibilities. These lie in all directions. and many souls develop in ways that are evil instead of in those that are good. But whether it becomes better or worse, we cannot admit that its personal identity is lost. As long as a man remains any one he must remain himself.

Another theory is that the soul is of an altogether different nature from the body, though it resembles the body in that it never loses its personal identity. According to this view the physical man is controlled by an imma-^{The immaterial soul.} terial principle, that resides within him from the earliest period of his existence, and never leaves him until the moment of death. This principle is called the soul. It is the power that thinks, and feels, and wills, and acts; that loves and hates, and

¹ Subhadra Bhikshu, *A Buddhist Catechism*.

that carries on all the intellectual and moral processes of the individual life. Between this principle and the body there is a most intimate and an absolutely indissoluble partnership. Like a plant which grows both downward and upward, the soul sends its energizing power into the physical frame, while at the same time, by the experiences of life, it develops its spiritual character. At death the body begins to decay, while the soul enters upon a freer and nobler state of existence.

The arguments by which the views of materialists are sustained are simple and forcible, though very far from conclusive.

Evidences of materialism insufficient. In its present state, which is the only state of which we have absolute personal knowledge, the soul is intimately connected with the body. What would occur if it were set entirely free from the body we have no means of learning by actual experience until death occurs.

Intimate connection of soul and body. The soul is developed with the body. Both are weak at birth, and both increase in power with the progress of time. Apparently they are inseparable. The knowledge of material things which the soul acquires comes, and must come, through the medium of the body, for this is the only means by which it can communicate with the outer world. Then, too, the condition of the body as to health and disease greatly modifies the activities of the soul. When the body is vigorous the mind is generally clear and strong. When the body is seriously injured, either by disease, or accident, or by natural decay, the mental powers are usually greatly weakened. Sometimes, as in extreme old age, the mind seems to be even more completely prostrated than is the body.

In this intimate connection with, and apparent dependence upon, the body, there is an indication that the soul is not an entity. If this were all the evidence upon the subject which we have, the inference would be that the soul is a result of the organization of matter, a very delicate and complex organization, it is true, but none the less a mere arrangement of atoms in definite proportions and relations. There would be no valid reason for supposing that a soul constituted in such a manner could have an existence separate from the body. The evidence thus far adduced seems to show that the soul was born with the body, and that it shares both in the well-being of the physical frame and in all the disasters with which that frame may be visited.



THE SOUL REVISITING THE BODY.

From these facts it is possible to suppose that as part and parcel of the body the soul will pass out of existence when the physical organization is destroyed by death. But it must be remembered that only a small part of the evidence bearing upon this question has yet been examined, and that what has been considered does not amount to proof. If no further light could be obtained, the fate of the soul at death would remain entirely in the realm of conjecture. Its future existence could neither be explicitly affirmed nor positively denied.

The body of man grows, just as the body of an animal grows, by the use of suitable food and by the observance, often unconscious, of certain laws which tend to promote its health and development. If the conditions are favor- *The growth of the body.* able this process continues for a number of years, which time, with a slight margin for variation, is known as the natural period of growth. Then follows a period, which is also pretty well defined as to extent, in which there is but little change. Growth has ceased but there is no retrograde movement. For a time the man is in the full vigor of life. He "holds his own" against all opposing forces.

This state, however, is inevitably followed by a period of decadence. At first the change is slight. The individual himself is not conscious of its beginnings, and, for a while, it is not observed by his most intimate companions. This is evident from the fact that when the indications of decline are first apprehended the change is so marked that it could not have occurred instantaneously without producing a violent shock. Once commenced, the decline continues, not regularly, perhaps, but certainly. In many cases the current is partially stemmed by careful attention to the laws of health, by a change of climate or occupation, or by medical assistance. But the decline is only retarded; it is never prevented. Each passing day brings the man nearer to the close of his earthly course, and no human skill or power can avert the impending catastrophe.

So far as the processes of growth and decay are concerned, the indications are in the line of materialism. They follow the general laws which govern the development of all animal life. Animals, as well as men, have their clearly defined periods of growth, maturity, and decay. But this does not make it certain that the event of death will bring the same fate to both classes

of beings. Neither does the common failure of the mental powers of man when his body is weakened make it clear that the former can have no existence after the latter has been destroyed. Still, we must admit that these facts, if taken by themselves, give ground for the fear that the one will perish with the other. If no further evidence upon the subject could be obtained the case would not be proved, but the presumption would be in favor of the material nature of the soul.

While there are many points of similarity in the processes of development of the mental powers as compared with those incident to the growth of the body, there are also strongly marked contrasts. When we study the higher nature we find evidences which point in the other direction from those which relate principally to the body. These evidences greatly weaken the force of the arguments which manifest the possibility, if not the probability, that the soul has only a material nature.

In the case of the mental as well as in that of the physical powers, there is growth and development. But, unlike that of the bodily nature, the growth of the mental faculties is continuous and self-perpetuating. Each new attainment is a help, a stepping-stone, to something higher. The mind grows with the body, it is true, but it grows much more rapidly than the body. It does not stop growing when the body reaches its full size and stature. On the contrary, its progress is then accelerated. It depends less and less upon details as its increasing power enables it to grasp the salient features of the problems which it attempts to master.

All through the period in which the body is merely maintaining the ground which it has already won, the mind continues to grow. And, if it has been properly disciplined and cultivated, it continues to enlarge and unfold long after the physical powers have begun to decline. By this process of growth the mental equipment is so greatly increased, and the natural powers of the mind are so powerfully reinforced, that, in many instances, when the man is sixty-five, or even seventy, years of age, he can perform intellectual feats for which he would have been utterly incompetent when his physical nature was in its prime.

Not only does the intellect continue to grow as the man

advances in years, but there is abundant evidence to prove that the limit of progress and power is never reached in this world. The mind continues to expand until the weakness of the body checks its development. No man ever has lived long enough, or ever will live long enough, in this world to allow his mental powers to come to the fullness of their capacities. This is true because each and every increase in knowledge gives power to obtain additional supplies, and the more the mind grows the greater becomes its power of expansion. And the fact that only a most meagre and imperfect development is possible in this life must be regarded as very strong presumptive evidence that the higher nature of man will outlive the body.

The modification of the apparent powers of the soul by the condition of the body is not as serious an objection to the doctrine of an immaterial nature as it is sometimes *Decline of the physical powers.* believed to be. It is true that disease or accident may so affect the brain as to lessen the manifestation of mental power. In these ways the avenues of communication with the external world, which the soul has used in the past, are partially closed. Barriers are erected which interfere with the free working of the mind in its relation to the physical universe. But there is no evidence whatever that they shut it out from communication with the spiritual world.

As long as the body remains in health, and the vigor of early and middle life remains, the soul uses it as an instrument with which to accomplish its purposes. When the body becomes diseased, sustains accidental injuries of a serious nature, or the physiological changes which are incident to old age occur, the instrument becomes imperfect. The owner of the instrument may be as strong and capable as he has ever been, and yet, on account of the injuries which that instrument has sustained, he may not be able to make his real condition known. The most talented artist cannot paint a fine picture with a brush that has been ruined by accident or by excessive use, and the most gifted player cannot obtain harmonies from an organ that is utterly out of tune. Yet it would be as reasonable to expect that the painter could do justice to himself with a spoiled brush, and the musician could please his audience with an instrument that is wholly unfit to use, as it is to imagine that even the most brilliant soul can reveal its powers through the medium of a body

that is fast falling into decay. So, though the body becomes old and worn, and the higher nature seems to be declining with it toward a common and an irretrievable ruin, we need not be alarmed regarding the final outcome. The probability is very great that the soul remains unharmed.

Numerous efforts have been made to visibly represent the soul. The Egyptians sometimes pictured it as a bird with a human head, the Greeks as a small human figure with wings, and the Romans as a butterfly. The Pythagoreans regarded the soul as a harmony which is placed in the body for punishment. During the mediæval period it was sometimes pictured as a naked child leaving the mouth of a man at death, and in other instances as a small naked man.

Many people who do not appear to have attempted an elaborate description have believed that the soul was possessed of a material form. In some parts of China a hole is broken through the roof in order to allow the soul of a dying person to leave the house, and in various European countries it was once customary to open a window or a door as the soul was departing from the body. Among those who have held a somewhat less material view the soul has been supposed to resemble, or to be surrounded by, air or water or even fire. Aristotle held that it was composed of an ethereal substance the properties of which were not known.

It was much easier for primitive man to believe that he had a spiritual existence in connection with that of his body than it was for him to form any adequate idea of the nature of his soul. The lower races and tribes of the present day are equally unable to describe it, and are probably unable to conceive of anything that approximates the importance of the higher qualities of being. To some extent the same difficulty is experienced everywhere. The most highly educated men of the present day, like those of former times, differ widely in their opinions upon this subject, and there seems to be no reason to suppose that a perfect agreement will ever be reached.

Certain indications that the soul is not material have already been noted. There are phenomena connected with its existence and activities which cannot be accounted for by a purely materialistic theory and which give reason for believing that it

is of a high spiritual nature. Man is an animal, it is true, but he is vastly more than an animal. The animal nature is only a minor part of his being. The real man is spiritual. It is a too common belief that he will become spiritual at death. While upon the earth he is regarded as principally a physical being. After death occurs he is supposed to have been changed into a spiritual nature. But there are not sufficient grounds for expecting that death will work any such transformation. The mere act of dying does not entirely revolutionize human nature. Man must be spiritual before he dies if he is to be spiritual after the body dies. If he is principally a physical being in this world the greater part of himself will perish at death, and if he lives at all beyond the grave he can have only a dwarfed and meagre existence. This we cannot believe to be the case. The old philosophy regarded man as a physical being which had a soul. The newer, and undoubtedly the truer, philosophy considers man as a spirit which has a body. The soul is not something which a man possesses, it is the man himself.

Among those who admit that the soul is primarily spiritual there is a wide difference of opinion as to its real constitution. Many hold that it is a simple substance, different from any material thing, without form, and wholly invisible to the eye of man even when aided by the most perfect optical instruments which human skill can construct. Being simple, it must be indivisible, and therefore it cannot perish as does the body by separation into various original elements.

If these premises are granted there will be force to the conclusion which is drawn from them. But no one has been able to prove that the soul is a simple substance. There are some indications that it may be so, but there are others which do not harmonize with this theory. The soul has many different activities, and it is not certain that they all proceed from a single source. On the contrary, these numerous and widely different powers seem to point to the existence of a complex organization. Yet, if the latter view is correct, it will not in the least interfere with the doctrine of a perfect unity of the soul, or with a belief that the higher nature of man is purely spiritual.

One of the most ingenious theories of the soul that has ever been formulated, though a matter of speculation as far back as the time of Plato, has been developed in comparatively recent

times, and has received the indorsement of a number of eminent scientists. It supposes man to have a dual mind. Instead of having only one mind, as has generally been believed, he has two. Of these, one is entirely objective. It belongs wholly to the brain, cannot act independently of it, and must inevitably perish when the brain is destroyed. The other mind is purely subjective. It is "the soul or spirit, and is itself an organized entity, possessing independent powers and functions."¹ This mind, or soul, is endowed with the capacity for existence apart from the body, and may reasonably be expected to live after the body has fallen into decay. This theory furnishes a probable explanation of various mental and spiritual phenomena for which it is difficult to account by the other methods which have thus far been suggested by those who have made a careful investigation of the nature of the human soul. Still, though it may be held to mark a great advance in the line of discovery, it is not universally regarded as an entirely adequate theory.

We talk about seeing people on the street, at their homes, or wherever the place of meeting may be, but in so doing we are only using a figure of speech. The idea of this sight seems very real, but it is only a pleasing fiction. The soul is invisible. The child never truly sees its parent and the parent never actually beholds its child. We communicate with our relatives and friends, it is true. Sometimes, in moments of intimate communion, our souls seem almost to flow together, but there is always a barrier which they cannot quite overleap. The wall of separation may be very thin, but it cannot be entirely removed. The real man is the soul, and the soul can never be seen by the organs of bodily vision.

"You do not see my friend at all;
You see what hides him from your sight."

In the gleam of intelligence in the eye, and the cordial clasp of the hand, we have intimations of what the nature of communication might be if the body did not intervene. But while the body remains we can see but darkly, we can know only in part. Until the robe of flesh is removed we shall never have a full view of the most intimate friend. Until that event occurs the real personality cannot be revealed. It is only when the

¹ T. J. Hudson, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*.

tabernacle of flesh falls into dust that the soul emerges into a light that will accurately reveal its character and proportions.

In this intimate union of the soul and body we have one of the great mysteries in which human life is enveloped. By just what means these two great natures act upon each other, and in precisely what manner they exert their individual influence, cannot be fully explained. The effects of this relationship and interaction are matters of such common observation that they cause but little surprise. Familiarity has led to indifference. But if they had never been brought to our attention, they would, if stated so that we could immediately comprehend them, cause unbounded amazement. *A great mystery.*

There is, also, much that is most perplexing connected with the life of the soul itself. How it can bear the confinement to which it is subjected in the tenement which it occupies, how it is able to be at one time the imperious master, and at another time the abject slave of the body, and how it can work through the body in such a manner as to make its great powers felt in the realm of the natural world, are only examples of a great number of questions which can be easily asked but to which no satisfactory answer can be given. Mrs. Sigourney well described the soul as

“ That mysterious thing,
Which hath no limit from the walls of sense,
No chill from hoary time, with pale decay
No fellowship, but shall stand forth unchanged,
Unscorched amid the resurrection fires,
To bear its boundless lot of good or ill.”

The mystery in which the whole subject is involved should not, in the least degree, awaken doubt as to the existence of the soul. Spiritual things do not have a monopoly of the mysteries with which we are familiar. There is mystery all around us, in earth, and air, and water, and in many other of the common things with which we have to do.

The processes of vegetable growth, by which each seed produces a plant or tree after its own kind, by which the roots take from the soil just the substances which are needed and reject all others, and by which the mineral elements which are required for the formation of the trunk and branches and twigs and leaves are raised, in opposition to the law of gravitation, from the ground and distributed through the whole system, are full

of mystery. Nothing but our familiarity with them prevents us from calling them miraculous. Equally marvelous is the union of diametrically opposite qualities of the luminiferous ether with which, scientists assert, all space is filled. This substance, though as solid as adamant, can neither be seen nor felt. It permeates all forms of matter, presses with almost incalculable weight upon everything in the universe, and yet allows the lightest as well as the heaviest bodies to pass through it without apparent resistance to their progress. Then, too, there are instruments of man's invention, like the telegraph, the telephone, and the phonograph, which give most wonderful results. Man can control these instruments, and can explain the mechanical principles which are involved in their working, but he is obliged to admit that the nature of the forces upon which their operation depends lies far within the region of the mysterious and the unknown. Wherever he goes, and whatever he does, man is surrounded by mysteries which are as inexplicable as are those in which the nature of the human soul is veiled.

The ordinary powers of the soul are wonderful, but there are other forces, latent in most people but certainly existent, which far transcend all of those which are manifested through the medium of the five senses. Many persons are able to use these higher powers almost at will, and by their aid can perform most remarkable feats. The phenomena which attend the use of these powers are altogether different from those which are seen in the exhibitions of conjurers and sleight of hand performers. And though some of these powers are often used by spiritualists, they are not monopolized by those who claim to have intercourse with the spirits of the dead. They are, in numerous cases, exhibited by persons who wholly reject the idea that inhabitants of the unseen world intervene in their behalf. Wonderful as they are, these powers are the natural and inherent energies of the souls through whose agency they are exhibited.

One of these great powers of the soul, and the one which is probably the most frequently exhibited, is that of clairvoyance, or "clear seeing." This is a "mysterious inward sense of sight," by means of which some persons can read letters which are folded and sealed, can see through the wall of a house as through a window, and can tell the time

Powers of the soul.

Clairvoyance.

indicated by a watch that has been set, placed several feet from them, and the dial of which, if seen at all, must be viewed through a metal covering. Doubtless there have been many cases of this nature in which there was collusion, or some other form of deception, but there are a great number of instances on record in which the high character of the parties concerned made such an explanation impossible. There are, also, records of many cases in which those who exhibited these great powers were so closely watched by trained observers that if imposture had been attempted it would certainly have been discovered. How the soul can penetrate such barriers is not known. The fact that it sometimes does surmount them is established beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The phenomena of somnambulism are equally beyond the range of the powers which are exhibited through the senses, and prove conclusively that the soul has higher faculties than those which are manifested in the *Somnambulism.* ordinary course of life. While in the somnambulistic state men and women have been known to walk along the steep roofs of houses without the slightest hesitation and return to their rooms in safety. While thus engaged their eyes were either tightly closed or else were wholly insensible to the action of light. Many persons when in this condition have made journeys of considerable length, have climbed rugged and dangerous cliffs, or have performed mechanical operations requiring no small degree of skill. Instances are on record, too, in which essays and sermons have been written and carefully corrected while the natural organs of sight were not in use and the person was apparently wholly unconscious of his surroundings. Upon waking the somnambulist usually returns at once to his natural state, but he never remembers anything that he has done while under the dominion of the influence which seems to bring into use the higher senses of the soul.

The hypnotic state, often called artificial somnambulism, may be self-induced by many persons, or it may be produced, with the proper class of subjects, by certain movements and directions of others. This condition may be- *Hypnotism.* come so profound as to render the subject insensible to physical pain. Before it reaches this stage, however, there is a great exaltation of several of the senses. When under the hypnotic

influence conscious effort ceases, but the subject will obey every command of the medium or operator with which he can comply, no matter how difficult or how ridiculous it may be. The subject is the veriest slave of the one who has brought him into the hypnotic state. He appears to follow unspoken mental suggestions as readily as he obeys spoken commands. His soul is thoroughly dominated by that of the one to whom he yields. This shows that a wonderful power is at the command of the man who can bring another into such a condition. In a lesser degree this power is manifested by many persons who, though apparently not specially gifted in other respects, are able to raise themselves to a state of great mental and spiritual exaltation. It is possible that the faculties through the activities of which these phenomena are manifested are common to all souls, though the majority of people do not even suspect their existence.

Another form in which the mind of one person may act upon the mind of another is known as telepathy, or thought transference. Though some are inclined to doubt the existence of such a force, its reality seems to be well established.

Telepathy. When this power is exercised one mind is influenced by another without the use of any of the ordinary means of communication. Often the parties are long distances, sometimes hundreds of miles apart. In the majority of cases there is no "mental suggestion" or "expectant attention," which are great aids in many hypnotic experiments. Various explanations of this "action of spirit on spirit at a distance" have been offered. Which, if any, of them is correct cannot be affirmed. The fact that the thought of one person may, without the use of signs or language, or any other tangible means of communication, be impressed upon the mind of another, and particularly upon that of one who is far away, is what concerns us most. It proves conclusively that the human soul is possessed of stupendous powers.

The influence of the soul upon the appearance of the body within which it dwells also naturally falls into the realm of the marvelous. Many hold that the soul really constructs the physical frame. They believe that "the body is built from within," and that the materials of which it is composed are fashioned and arranged by the person who makes it his home.

The soul an architect.

“For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form, and doth the body make.”

This is rather of an extreme statement, though it contains a great deal of truth. It is hardly within bounds to say that the soul actually builds the body, for some persons whose characters are most amiable have bodies which are very far from attractive, while others have dwarfed and unlovely souls in beautiful bodies. Yet it is a fact, that to a considerable extent the soul makes its impress upon the body. The character of an individual who has departed from the path of right is often indicated by his countenance before any serious injury to his physical organization is apparent. And to an equal degree a pure and noble soul will make its impress upon the tabernacle of flesh in which it abides.

The soul has a powerful influence upon the actual condition, as well as upon the appearance, of the body. This is especially noticeable in cases of accident or disease. Instances Influences the physical condition. are on record in which men who have met with some mishap and supposed themselves to be severely, if not fatally, injured, have suffered intensely, and been physically prostrated, until an examination showed that they had sustained only a slight scratch. As soon as they became aware of their real condition their pain ceased, and their strength was restored. Many a sick man has recovered his health because he hoped and determined to get well, and many another has died from what would have been merely a slight illness if it had not been aggravated by fear that it would prove fatal. Experiments with criminals have shown that men may die from purely imaginary wounds. Many cases have occurred in which men have fallen dead upon the receipt of news, in some cases bad, but in many instances good, for which they were not prepared. In such instances the emotions of the soul proved too powerful for the body to withstand.

The fact that the soul exerts a powerful influence upon the body has been made the basis of quite an elaborate system of medical treatment. The acceptance of this method has doubtless been retarded by the extravagant assertions of some of its advocates. Yet, while much more has been claimed for it than the facts which have been adduced appear to warrant, there is no doubt that certain forms of disease can be successfully treated by means of mental impressions.

The most complete demonstration of the power of the soul over the body which has ever been known, or which can reasonably be demanded, has been furnished by Hindu fakirs who voluntarily suspend animation and allow themselves to be buried for days, or even weeks, at a time, and who come into the full possession of all their powers when brought into the open air. Several fully authenticated cases of this kind are on record. It is said, too, that Professor A. J. Seymour, of Utica, New York, who has carefully studied Indian magic, has been "buried under a mound of earth in a room for twenty-one days" without sustaining the slightest injury.

Details differ somewhat, but, as described by Professor Seymour to a newspaper reporter, the general course of procedure when one is to be buried alive is something as follows: After dieting for some time, the magician throws himself into a trance and gradually becomes unconscious. When animation is suspended, the mouth, ears, and nostrils are filled with wool and sealed with wax, the body is rubbed with paraffin, which closes all the pores, and is then wrapped in a blanket saturated with alum water. When thus prepared it is laid in a box, or casket, and placed in a tomb, or buried in the ground. That such an experiment is attended with great danger is evident to any intelligent person. But the fact that it has, in several instances, been performed under circumstances which rendered deception impossible shows that, when it has been trained for such a purpose, the soul may obtain control of the body to an extent that is almost miraculous.

There are many things which unite to prove that the soul is greatly superior to the body. This superiority is most clearly indicated in the moral realm. The body, as such, is, *Superiority of the soul.* in an ethical sense, neither good nor bad. It has no moral character. Many sins are committed through the agency of the body, but the soul is the power that instigates, and that is responsible for them. The soul can resist tendencies to evil. This the body cannot do. Apart from the soul the body is inert. It can no more sin after it is dead than it can walk. Besides, many sins, as pride, and envy, and malice, are purely spiritual. They are often manifested through the body, but they have their origin in the soul. Whatever the degree of guilt that attaches to them may be, it belongs to the soul.

The superiority of the higher nature is also shown by the relation in which it stands to the physical frame. If it were like the body, and had no higher powers than those of the body, the two natures would develop along exactly parallel lines. The soul would grow only while the body was growing. When one reached its full capacity for development the other would do the same. The large man, too, would have a large mind and the small man would have only a comparatively feeble intellect. But we know that neither of these things occur. The mind often continues to increase in power long after the body has passed the period of growth and entered into a state of decline. And it is a matter of the most common observation that the size of the body gives no indication of the strength of the intellect with which the man is endowed. It is not infrequently the case that a physical giant is an intellectual dwarf. Often, too, a mighty mind dwells in a body that is far below the average size.

The soul is, also, superior to the body because it is permanent. Every few years the man has a new body, but he remains the same individual. The body is constantly going through the process of change. It is not just the same to-day that it was yesterday, and it will not be the same to-morrow that it is to-day. But no change of this nature affects the soul. It grows with age and experience, but it does not discard what it has previously acquired. What it was in infancy, and childhood, and middle life, it is in old age. Like the body it is constantly gathering new material, but, unlike that organism, it does not eliminate the old. The soul continues, and, by its persistence, proves its superiority to the inconstant physical frame.

Then, too, in the matter of endurance the soul shows a wonderful superiority to the body. The latter may be so severely burned that its powers will be greatly impaired, or so terribly mangled that large portions of it must be removed, but the soul remains intact, and its life goes on with undiminished power. Sometimes the body is injured by paralysis to such an extent that one half of it is utterly useless as far as motion and sensation are concerned. The man whose body is in this condition cannot walk, and cannot perform physical labor, but he may be able to think as connectedly and as clearly as he could before the injury was sustained.

Disease or accident may cause the loss of one or more of the senses without impairing the strength and activity of the soul. A man may become blind, and yet his mental processes may go on as before. A most valuable means of acquiring knowledge has been destroyed, it is true, and one of the great sources of enjoyment has been cut off, but the soul retains, in the fullest measure, all of its former powers of thought and action. The loss of other means of communication with the outer world is equally powerless to affect the higher nature. A man may be deaf as well as blind, may lose the sense of touch, and other bodily powers may fail, so that he is almost helpless as far as physical things are concerned, and yet the life of the soul may remain as vigorous as it has ever been.

In the power of action, the soul shows its great superiority to the body. The soul is the active, energizing principle of human existence. Matter, by itself, is passive. It has no energy and can exert no power. The body cannot move of itself. When a man walks he takes his body. He uses it as a means of locomotion. But the body is the inferior member of the human organization. It goes with the man, but it never takes him, and never directs him where to go. The soul is the active partner and its rule is supreme.

That this view is correct is proved beyond all question by what occurs when the partnership of body and soul is dissolved. Between the time of death and the period at which the disorganizing forces become active, the bodily organs with which the man has had intercourse with the external world are intact. Yet the eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear; all of the functions of the body have ceased. Within the living man there must have been some power that was superior to the organs of sense and was able to use them as its servants. That power was the soul. When death occurred, the organs became useless not because they were destroyed, but because the power that had controlled them was no longer present.

Another point in which the superiority of the soul over the body is shown is in its vastly wider range of action. Merely by our own exertions we can take our bodies only a short distance from the locality in which we chance to be. Our progress is slow and toilsome, and we are soon wearied by the effort which it requires. If we visit a distant country we

The source of activity.

Unlimited range.

are obliged to make extensive preparations, call various forces of nature and inventions of man to our aid, and spend a good deal of time in reaching our destination. But in spirit we can go there without preparation, without aid from outside sources, and without effort or delay. In thought we can go around the world, visit the most distant heavenly bodies, or journey to the remotest conceivable space, without moving our bodies or spending more than the briefest moment of time.

The fact that it has the wonderful powers which have been noted must be regarded as conclusive evidence that the soul is not only superior to the body, but that it is of a radically different nature. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that its superior powers and higher qualities will insure its existence after the body has perished.

There are but few points connected with the soul of man which have received more attention, or concerning which there has been a wider divergence of opinion, than that which ^{*The origin of the soul.*} pertains to its origin. In the early history of the race, and among the uncivilized peoples of later times, ideas upon this subject were exceedingly vague and unsatisfactory. The soul itself was a mystery in the presence of which the untutored man was helpless. The origin of this impenetrable mystery lay still further in the background of darkness and of doubt. A belief that there was a soul within him the primitive man could not resist. Whence it came he could only surmise.

It was not the primitive man alone who was in ignorance regarding the origin of the soul. His civilized and cultured successor also groped in darkness when attempting to solve the great problem of his origin. Philosophers, and poets, and sages, and logicians, treated the subject with all the powers and skill at their command. They viewed it from different points, and formed widely different opinions, but none of them could speak with authority. Each and all were baffled in their search.

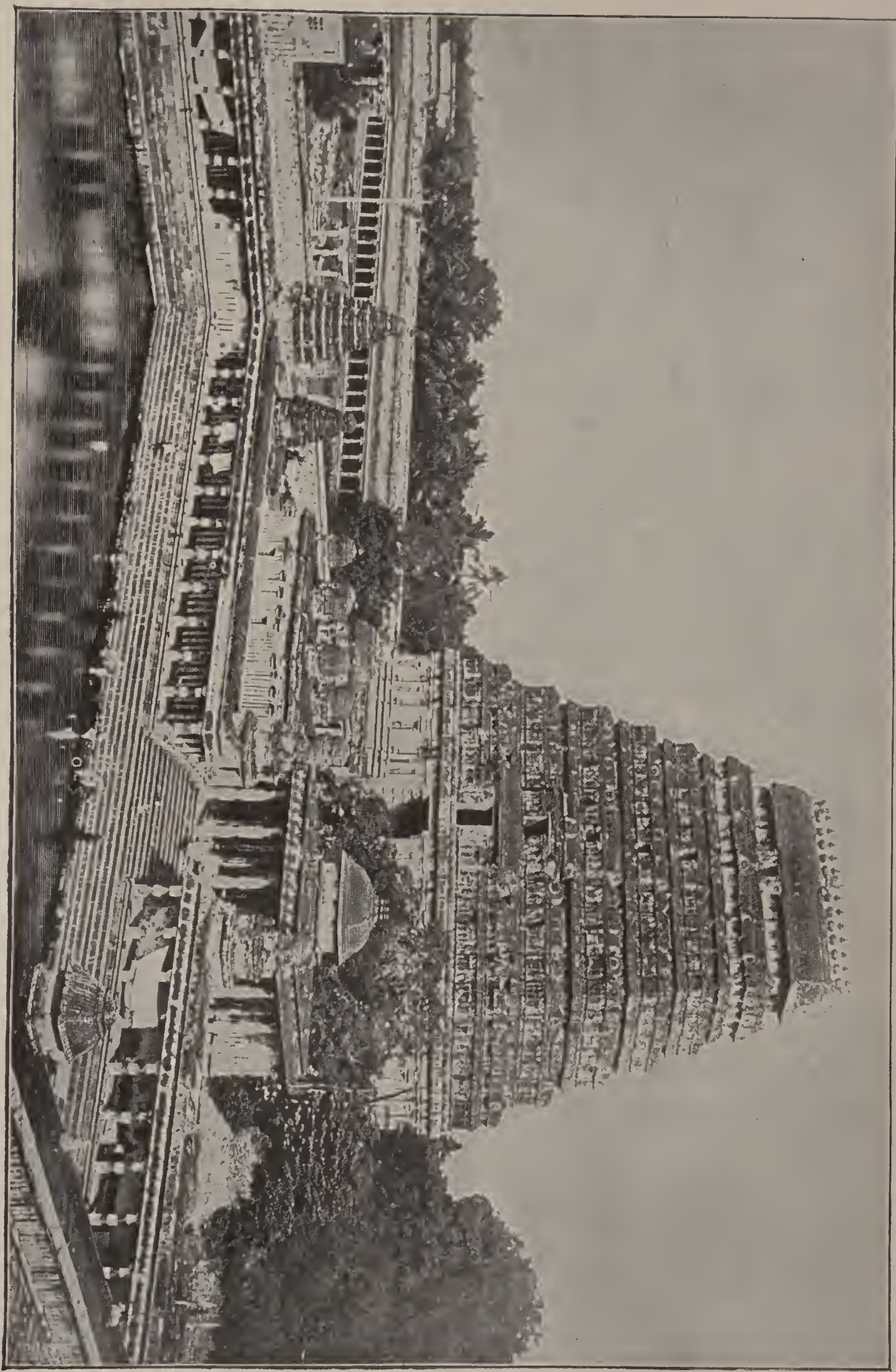
It was not until man received a revelation from a higher power that he could speak with certainty concerning the origin of his soul. The first authoritative statement regarding ^{*Made known by revelation.*} his creation we find in the book of Genesis. Here we read that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

No other explanation that has ever been offered so fully accounts for the wonderful powers and capacities of the human soul. And no discoveries of science, and no investigation in the vast realm of knowledge, has eliminated the great truth which this simple statement conveys. Neither have the modifications which have been made in the form of the doctrine as it was previously held lessened, in the slightest degree, the belief that the Creator of the universe and the Maker of man's physical frame was also the Author of the human soul.

Among those who are fully agreed that the soul had its origin in God, there is a great difference of opinion as to the time and method in which it came into being. The question *When and how.* has long been under discussion, and it seems to be no nearer a settlement than it was hundreds of years ago. The advocates of each theory adduce arguments which are sufficient, so far as they themselves are concerned, for the establishment of their own opinions, but which do not prove convincing to those who hold other views.

One of the theories by which men have endeavored to account for the existence, and determine the origin, of the soul is that of emanation. According to this view the soul of *Emanation.* man is, in a separate form, a portion of God. Spiritual existence is represented as an endless chain. At birth the soul comes from God. At death it returns to Him. It does not, however, return as an individual, to maintain a separate existence, but to become, as it was before its temporary sojourn on the earth, a part of the universal Spirit. While it is in the body the soul is a separated fragment of God. Before birth and after death it has no identity, no individuality, but is simply merged in the infinity of His being, with nothing whatever to distinguish it from any other portion of Himself. This is a fanciful theory, and the arguments which have been presented in its support are not at all convincing.

The principal passage of Scripture that can be quoted in defense of this doctrine is found in the twelfth chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, and reads as follows: "And the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it." But the fact that the spirit is the gift of God does not prove that it was a part of His being. He gives the sunshine and the rain, but we do not regard them as of the same essence



TEMPLE AT MADURA.

as His own being. The doctrine of emanation is pantheistic in its tendency. It is not only not supported by the general tenor of the Scriptures, but is in direct opposition to some of their plainest teachings.

Concerning the verse that has been quoted, it may be said that some regard it as an interpolation, though it is hardly probable that this view is correct. The natural meaning of the passage seems to be that at death the body and soul of man are separated, and each returns to its original source. This is the only explanation that harmonizes with the line of thought which runs through the book from which the verse is taken, or which accords with the doctrines presented in other portions of the Bible.

The theory of emanation is as clearly opposed to reason as it is to Scripture. God is not material. Therefore He cannot be divided into parts. What occurs in the creation of a soul is not a division of the essence of His being but a communication of His life.

This doctrine would make God both a sinner and a sufferer. It would, also, take away all the meaning of the discipline and the experience of the earthly life of man. At death the soul of the wicked man, just as truly and just as quickly as that of a good man, would be assimilated into the actual being of God. The virtuous and the vicious would be equally blest, and the man who had been a bold blasphemer, and who had even denied the existence of God, would be received, not merely into His presence, but into His very being. The patriot and the martyr would receive no better reward than the traitor and the persecutor, and the foulest murderer would not only escape all punishment but would become part of a holy God. No theory which would lead to such results as these can be sustained either by Scripture or by reason.

This theory has been widely held, and many able theologians have accepted it as the one which most fully answers the question of the origin of the soul. According to this view the physical nature of the human race was *Creationism.* created on the sixth day, when Adam and Eve were formed from the dust of the ground. All of their descendants have, so far as their bodies were concerned, come into the world in the natural order of birth from human parents. For all mankind,

after the first pair to the end of time, no creative act was required to perpetuate the race. But this law of being extended only to the physical frame. No natural provision was made for endowing the body with a soul. Consequently, each individual soul, from that of Cain to that of the last child to be born while the world endures, would require a direct creative act for its production. The soul is supposed to be infused into the body at some period in its embryonic state, though there are those who hold that this does not occur until the time of birth.

This theory does not harmonize with the general order of things. It is more mechanical, and more complicated, than natural processes usually are. It is not in accordance with the ordinary way in which God accomplishes His purposes. Then, too, it seems to conflict with the statement of Scripture that the work of creation, so far as setting in motion the great principles of development were concerned, was completed in six days. When everything had been arranged for the orderly progress of events, and forces had been generated and set in motion which would carry on to perfection the work which had been commenced, God rested from His labors. But according to this theory the work of direct creation is constantly going on, and there must be a "miraculous or supernatural act" of God whenever a child becomes endowed with a soul.

Another difficulty connected with this theory is found in the universal tendency of man to sin. When God finished the creative work described in the book of Genesis, He pronounced it all very good. It is not to be supposed that He would continue the work of creation upon any lower plane. Yet we find children coming into the world with an irresistible tendency to sin. This fact proves that if each soul is, at or about the time of birth, the result of a direct act of Divine power, the perfection of the early creation is a thing of the past. The theory does not admit of any satisfactory explanation of the fact that the soul naturally tends toward the evil rather than toward the good.

Another form of the theory of creationism has been adopted by some, who have held that when Adam was created God also created all the souls of the human race. These souls, however, were not supposed to become active until the bodies for which they were designed had been prepared. Such an explanation does not make the subject more intelligible. On the contrary,

it appears to deepen the mystery in which the origin of the soul is veiled.

According to the theory which is known as traducianism, the soul of man is of supernatural origin, but the power of God which was manifested in its creation was exerted, once for all, on the sixth day of the creative week. The soul, *Traducianism.* as well as the body, of the child is an offspring from its parents. Neither for the body nor for the soul of the child is there any new creation from nothing, but in the formation of each there is the orderly working of a natural law. Man is both physical and spiritual, and the child inherits from its parents the two natures.

The charge of materialism, which has been urged against this theory, is met by the assertion that the soul is neither originated nor propagated in a physical manner, but results from a transmission and individualization of a purely spiritual nature which had its origin in God.¹ This theory is a great aid in sustaining the theological doctrine of original sin, with which it perfectly harmonizes. Though it presents difficulties of no small magnitude, it has probably been more generally accepted than any other explanation of the mystery which it seeks to solve.

Another theory which has been adopted by some speculative philosophers is that of dissemination. According to this view, when the material universe came into being the germs, or seeds, of souls were formed, and were scattered everywhere, ready to become active whenever the proper conditions for their development should be attained. The child is born without a soul, but one is inhaled with its earliest breath, or is taken into the body with its first nourishment. A further development of this theory gives to all nature potential capacities for life. Matter is formed of monads which are dormant, but which, under favorable circumstances, may become conscious. Man is composed of multitudes of these monads. Of these, the one which has become the most fully developed, and has risen to such a height as to make it the ruler of the organization, is believed to have become the real and immortal soul.² This doctrine appears to have no more solid foundation than bold speculation and wholly unwarranted assumption.

¹ W. G. T. Shedd, D. D., *Dogmatic Theology*.

² W. R. Alger, *Doctrine of a Future Life*.

The theory that the soul had an existence before it was united with the body in which it at length finds its home has been accepted by a large number of people at various periods and in different lands. Some have held that the formation of souls was one of the first manifestations of creative power, and that when it enters a human body the soul descends to earth from a higher and nobler realm. Others have thought that the previous existence was on a lower plane of being, and that there has been a long and weary ascent before the dignity of a human soul has been reached.

Preëxistence.

Many who believe in the preëxistence of the soul claim that the doctrine is taught in the Bible. Certain passages in the Old Testament have been quoted in its favor, but in none of them does the theory appear to be sustained by a natural interpretation. Perhaps the strongest evidence adduced from this source is the following passage from the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm: —

The teaching of Scripture.

“My frame was not hidden from thee,
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance,
And in thy book were all my members written,
Which day by day were fashioned,
When as yet there was none of them.”

It seems difficult to read the idea of the preëxistence of souls into this quotation. The purpose of the inspired writer appears to have been to set forth the doctrine that God's watchful care is over all of His children and that nothing can be concealed from Him.

In the New Testament the principal passage which is quoted as giving countenance to the doctrine of the preëxistence of the human soul is found in the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to John. In the narrative with which this chapter opens we are told that as He was passing along Jesus saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The disciples, who accompanied the Master at this time, asked, “Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?” In reply, they were assured that neither the man himself, nor his parents, had been guilty of any sin for which the affliction which he had been called to endure was the punishment.

The question which was asked by the disciples has been con-

strued by some as indicating a belief, on their part, in the pre-existence of the soul. It is said that they thought it possible that the man was suffering for sins which he had committed in some previous state of existence. But it is not certain that the questioners had this idea in mind, or that they had a clear apprehension that any deep meaning might be attached to their interrogation. Still, it is possible that they desired to obtain from Christ a definite statement regarding the doctrine of preëxistence, which was held by some of the Jews of their time, and with which they were probably somewhat familiar. Be that as it may, it is certain that in the reply which they received the doctrine was not sanctioned. And there is no valid reason for supposing that any of the New Testament writers intended to teach that this world was not the first home of the human soul.

In the books of the Apocrypha the case is very different from what we find it in the Old and New Testaments. Here much is found to favor the idea of the preëxistence of souls. In various other Jewish writings, particularly in the Talmud, the doctrine comes into considerable prominence. This was undoubtedly due, in part, to the fact that the Greek philosophy of the day had deeply impressed the Jewish mind.

The mystic religions of the East have made the doctrine of the preëxistence of the soul very prominent in their systems of faith. The idea seems congenial to the Oriental mind and is very fully elaborated by philosophers as well as by religious teachers. In the early days of the Christian religion this doctrine found considerable favor among the members of the new organization. In modern times it has been accepted by many able scholars, some of whom attained considerable prominence as religious teachers.

The doctrine of the preëxistence of the human soul has not always been very clearly defined, and a great deal of latitude in its interpretation has been allowed. Plato taught that "God made the soul in origin and existence prior to the body." Plutarch believed that the soul came from heaven and is "troubled in this new and strange place." Philo held that souls came from God, have their home in the air, and are of differing degrees of influence. The ones living at the greatest distance from the earth act as the agents of communication between God and the world. Those who live nearer the

A doctrine of Oriental religions.

Various interpretations.

earth enter human bodies, in which they dwell for a time in a sort of dormant state from which they are finally released by the death of the physical frame.

The East Indian philosophers seem to have regarded the soul as not only existing prior to the body, but as having had a being from eternity. They find it difficult to believe "that a soul has a beginning," and are confident that all souls that are now in the flesh have existed before. Their ideas upon this subject are well described in the following lines: —

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar." ¹

For the coming of the soul into this earthly state, where so much of suffering is inevitable, and where sorrow and disappointment are certain to be its close companions during a large part of the weary journey, various explanations have been offered. Some have supposed that the spirits became tired of their home above and yielded to a natural desire to visit the earth for a change of scene. Others have held that souls enter human bodies in obedience to a command of the Evil One. Another theory is that God has condemned the soul to imprisonment in the body in order to punish it for sins which it has committed in the past. There is, also, the view that God sends souls into the world for educational, rather than for retributive purposes. The life in the body is a preparation of the soul for something that is higher and better than the earthly state and condition.

The theory of the previous existence of the soul has been adopted by some to aid in the explanation of certain problems connected with the tendency of mankind to wander away from God. There are, also, various other matters relating to human life and experience, upon which it is supposed to throw a clearer light than we obtain from any other source.

There is often an apparent partial recognition of ideas which, at the time they are presented, seem to be new, yet which also leave a vague impression that they have been in the mind before, and have faded from the memory. This fact has been

¹ Wordsworth, *Intimations of Immortality*.

regarded as an indication that at some distant period in the past, and in some form of being of which we have no recollection, these ideas had been impressed upon the mind. Then, too, the indescribably melancholy feeling which sometimes comes over one in hours of solitude, or at times in which the sensibilities are deeply moved, is thought, by some, to be a sort of homesickness of the soul that is longing for its earlier and perhaps happier abode. Then, too, the frequent impressions which we have of something which lies just beyond our reach, and the waves of emotion, sometimes joyous and at others despondent, which, at various times and without apparent cause, seem to come directly from some far distant realm, lead the speculative mind toward the conclusion that it had an existence previous to the one of which it is now conscious. But these, and all similar indications, appeal merely to the sentimental side of our nature. They cannot stand under a careful investigation. When brought to the court of the intellect they are soon swept away. The doctrine itself is beset with difficulties, and is involved in mysteries which are fully as much in need of explanation as are those for which it has been offered as a solution.

Even if the doctrine that the soul had existed in a previous state could be sustained, it would throw no light upon the question of its origin. The difficulty would be carried further back into the past, but it would be, so far as its nature and extent are concerned, just the same as it had been before the theory was adopted. It is the source of the soul, not the time in which it came into being, with which we are now concerned. The idea of preëxistence is interesting, and to some minds it is very attractive, but it utterly fails to furnish an explanation of the origin of the higher nature of man.

*Does not account
for the origin of
the soul.*

Long ago, before the term "evolution" came into common use, there were many who believed that, by a long and weary process, the soul had been developed from a lower state of being. The doctrine has been held in widely different forms. Upon its lowest plane it is the theory of pure materialism. Its believers hold that what is called the soul, though of a more refined quality, is as truly material as is the body itself, and that it will not prove more enduring than the physical organization of which it forms a part.

Evolution.

Others who believe in evolution take a much higher view of the soul itself, and of its origin. Herbert Spencer held that the soul is a divine effluence. Professor Fiske has declared that he "can see no insuperable difficulty in the notion that at some period in the evolution of Humanity this divine spark may have acquired sufficient concentration and steadiness to survive the wreck of material forms and endure forever."¹ The belief that the higher as well as the lower nature of man "has been developed by natural processes" is very common among evolutionists, and is held by not a few who are eminent for piety as well as for learning.

A modified form of the doctrine of evolution, which is in more perfect harmony with the narrative of the creation of man as it appears in the book of Genesis, has already been mentioned, but should receive a brief notice in this connection. It appeals strongly to those who are anxious to keep as closely as possible to the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, but who are troubled by the apparent discrepancies between the teachings of science and the statements of revelation.

Those who accept this theory believe that the physical form of man, and to a lesser extent his mental nature also, has been built up by a long process of development and improvement. Commencing with the single cell, which is the lowest form of living organization, they trace the line of being up an ascending scale of forms which became more and more complex as progress was made, until, after the lapse of untold ages, the body reached a sufficient degree of development to fit it for the reception of a spiritual nature. When this high point of vantage had been reached, the God who had formed the cell and endowed it with marvelous powers of development, by another distinct creative act imparted to the higher organization a living and an immortal soul.

To a great many persons this theory of the origin of the human soul will not be satisfactory. Many others will regard it as the best explanation that, in the present state of our knowledge, it is possible to make. Like all other theories it has its difficulties. But it is neither unscriptural nor unreasonable. It recognizes a specific act by a personal God in the creation of the first human soul, as fully as does any other theory. Consequently it is not

¹ John Fiske, *The Destiny of Man*.

open to the principal objection to the doctrine of evolution as it is stated by those who assume that the soul, as well as the body, of man has been developed from a bit of protoplasm, without the direct intervention of an intelligent and an almighty Creator.

An interesting question regarding the human soul relates to the place, or position, which it occupies in the human frame. It is a question which has been considered by thoughtful men of past ages and which still remains a not infrequent subject for discussion.

The place of the soul.

When the soul is regarded as something of a material nature and form there is no incongruity in seeking to find its location in some particular spot in the bodily organization. And even if the theory that it is immaterial is held, there will be a natural desire to locate the centre of operations of this "simple, spaceless essence" which exerts such wonderful power and is endowed with such magnificent capacities.

The answers to the question concerning the place of the soul in the body have been numerous, and have differed widely. Many of the theories advanced have been untenable, and very few have been satisfactory. Some of the primitive races have believed that the soul had its seat in the heart; others have thought that it was in the blood. Some have regarded it as having parts, and have thought that these parts were distributed among the various organs of the body, as the liver and kidneys; while others have located it, in part at least, in the bones. This idea was rejected by some of the Greek philosophers who held that the soul was not material, and could not be divided into parts, but was "whole or entire in every part of the body."

Various modern investigators have held that the place of the soul was in the brain. Descartes believed it to be in the pineal gland, a small body in the brain; and Leibnitz assigned it to a "mathematical point" in that organ. Others assume that while, in a general way, the brain may be said to be the seat of the mind, yet different portions of this organ perform very different functions, and, consequently, for the direction of its diverse activities, various seats are required.¹

The statement, which is sometimes made, that the brain is the seat of the soul, is often misapprehended. It seems to indicate that the soul, as an entity, is seated, or located, in some part of

¹ George T. Ladd, D. D., *Outlines of Physiological Psychology*.

the physical body. So far as it can be localized, the brain may be called its home. It is a real being, it can be acted upon by the brain and can act on the body through the brain.¹ But there is not sufficient evidence to prove that it is entirely within the brain, and many facts have been brought to light which tend to show that such is not the case.

The spiritual nature of the soul makes it difficult for us to think of it as confined in any part of a material body. It uses the body for the accomplishment of its purposes, but its powers are not the same as are those of the physical frame, and it is subject to widely different laws. There are phenomena which seem to justify the supposition that the soul is as truly, and as fully, in one part of the body as it is in another. Some claim that the soul is "not in the body in any physical sense," but that the physical organism is merely the instrument of a higher power. In other words: "The soul is in the body only in the sense that its energies flow through the body."²

If any particular portion of the body is assigned as the place of the soul it must be the brain. The two are most intimately connected. On account of this close union there is a certain sense in which, perhaps, the brain may be properly called the seat of the soul. But it must not be supposed that the brain and the soul are identical. The brain is so constituted that, like every other part of the body, it must decay. This is an inexorable law of the physical being. But as far as we know, and knowledge goes far enough to prove convincing to most minds, no such law applies to the soul. "Eight or nine ounces of nervous tissue, held in suspension in forty or more ounces of pure water, do not constitute the mind or soul of man."³ This physical matter must become disorganized and pass into new combinations. But the decay of the brain, in common with the remainder of the body, need not permanently affect the soul any more than the tearing down of a house need prove an injury to its former occupant.

It is evident that unless we take a purely materialistic view, we can speak of the measurement of the soul in only a figurative manner. We must regard the soul as an entity, yet as invisible

¹ William A. Hammond, M. D., *A Treatise on Insanity*.

² R. A. Armstrong, *God and the Soul*.

³ J. R. Nichols, M. D., *Whence, What, Where?*

and intangible. The description of the human mind as a "spiritual substance, occupying no space and having no form," applies equally well to the whole psychical or soul nature of man. It cannot be isolated, or weighed, or measured. Neither the physiologist, the biologist, the chemist, nor any other scientist, can discover it. Therefore, the terms in which we speak of material bodies are not quite adapted to a description of the soul. *The measurement of the soul.*

Still, unless metaphysical terms are employed, we are obliged, in treating of the soul, to use language which will make physical things the basis of comparison. It is as natural to speak of a whole-souled man, or a man with a large soul, as it is to call a man large who has a commanding physical frame. When some act of contemptible meanness is described the hearers almost involuntarily think of the perpetrator as a man with a small soul. The idea may not be philosophical, but it is intelligible. No one mistakes the meaning of terms denoting size when they are applied to the soul. They denote the degree of respect, or want of respect, which we have for the real and entire man.

While our ignorance of motives and circumstances makes us unable always to form our opinions with absolute fairness and justice, there is a solid foundation for the principle which is involved in the use of terms descriptive of the size of the soul. As compared with the average of mankind, some men are large and others are small of soul. This fact does not attract as general attention as does the difference which is apparent when the comparison is limited to the intellectual powers. It is one of the most common things in life to think of a profound scholar, an eminent musician, or a valiant soldier, as a great man. Unfortunately, there is not as universal recognition, or as general appreciation, of superior moral greatness as there is of great intellectual power.

The powers of the soul which can be made available at any one time seem to vary with the conditions in which they are exerted. Under the influence of some exciting event the orator may rise far above his usual level. Sometimes in treating the great themes of the Gospel a preacher speaks with unwonted eloquence. His soul seems to expand until it overflows. His hearers are carried along on a wave of feeling which originates in his own soul. He moves their minds as the branches of trees

are moved by the wind. This is not a merely mental phenomenon. In a large degree it pertains to the soul.

There may be, also, a growth and development of the soul. The process is similar to that of the growth and expansion of the mental powers. If it is properly conducted, spiritual education gives as marked results as does the training of the body or the cultivation of the mind.

Then, too, like the body and the mind, the soul may decline in power. If the body is abused it becomes diseased and may soon be ruined. If the mind is neglected, or the principles upon which its welfare depends are violated, it soon becomes impaired. So the soul that is neglected or abused soon degenerates. The spiritual nature is dwarfed and enfeebled, and the process of decline may go on until its former character is almost wholly effaced. This may, or may not, occur in connection with physical or intellectual decadence. The degradation of the higher nature results from causes which have to do with morals, and some of which do not seriously interfere with either physical or intellectual well-being. The coarser vices, it is true, are brutalizing in their effects upon both body and mind, but many souls are ruined by sins which do not debar those who commit them from the most refined society.

When an attempt is made to estimate the value of the soul all language fails. There are no terms in which its worth can be indicated. All comparisons combined can give only the faintest idea. They hardly touch the circumference of the subject. No thought of man can grasp it. No imagery, however vivid it may be, can picture it to the mind. It infinitely transcends all human comprehension.

While we can hardly begin to understand the powers and capacities of the higher nature, we know that within the soul all the great realities of the present life are centred. Not only this, but all the boundless possibilities of the future pertain to the soul. The soul is the real man. Whatever material things the individual may secure will surely fall from his grasp at death. Houses and lands, stocks and bonds, goods and chattels, must all be left behind when he who has been their possessor leaves the world. The man who now has vast wealth at his command will take with him no more of the riches of this world than will be carried by the man who dies because he is too poor to buy

The value of the soul.

food upon which to live. Each of them will have his soul, and neither of them will have anything but his soul, when he enters the unseen world.

If the doctrine of materialism is correct, man will lose everything when he loses his body. When death occurs the ship goes down with all on board. There will be no salvage. The wreck is total. The ruin is eternal. To one holding this form of belief death is the final, and the absolutely remediless calamity. It is a profoundly sad, yet an inevitable conclusion of life.

To the man who believes in an endless existence beyond the grave the value of the soul assumes boundless proportions. Sometimes the possibilities of that existence rise before him in unspeakable grandeur. At others they press upon him with an appalling weight. But it is only when he comes to realize that instead of having a soul somewhere within his body, as was formerly taught, the soul is his real being, that he gains anything approaching the true estimate of its value.

This is a distinction that should be sharply drawn. We are apt to think of the soul as something belonging to the man. We should exalt it to its true position. It is the possessor instead of the possession. It is the man himself instead of something that the man has. Christ taught this truth in the most emphatic manner when He assured His disciples that those who could only kill the body were not to be feared. They could do but little harm because they were not able to destroy the soul. The life, the sufferings, and the death of Christ, as well as the doctrines which He taught, all attest the incalculable value of the human soul.

What the ultimate destiny of the soul will be depends upon its own decision. It may be fitted for an existence which is glorious beyond all human conception, or it may be so wrecked and ruined that its future will be filled with unspeakable horror. Not every one can obtain worldly riches, or secure earthly fame or honor, but to every man there is given an opportunity to save his soul. Whether he develops his good qualities, and through the appointed way of God reaches the true goal of his being, or gives himself up to evil and becomes a blot upon creation instead of being one of its stars, his real self will be all that he has, or that he ever can have, in an existence that stretches away into a future that knows no limits and that has no bounds.

CHAPTER XV

THE JOURNEY AND DESTINATION OF THE SOUL

FROM an early period it has been a very general belief that the soul did not perish when the individual died. It is true that this belief was not always clear and strong. The light of nature was dim, and for long and weary ages revelation was incomplete. At times faith wavered and expectation declined. Yet through all the mystery which has gathered around the close of the earthly life some rays of hope have penetrated. Mankind has never been willing to accept a permanent belief that the end of life on earth was also the end of existence.

It was plain, even to the dullest comprehension, that death wrought a great change in the individual. The power and energy which he displayed when living entirely disappeared when life left the body. Something which has been designated by a term meaning the soul, or spirit, had departed. And though, as far as details are concerned, there has been a great difference in the belief of various peoples, there has been a quite general supposition that at the time of death, or very soon afterward, the soul commenced a journey to some region unseen by mortal eyes. The conditions under which it was thought the journey must be performed, and the nature of the new country and the new life which it entered, have been strongly colored by the character and occupations of the people. Those who were destitute of education and who had made but little progress in the arts have been satisfied to look forward to a land in which they could have good hunting and fishing, in which nature would always be kindly, and into which sickness and trouble would never come. With the development of intellect and the advance of civilization there came a desire for a higher state of being than that which the savage regarded as giving the full measure of happiness. Instead of the pleasures of the chase, the companionship of the great and

good was looked forward to, or at least hoped for, as one of the chief delights of the future existence. In later days religion has held out the prospect of great moral and intellectual development, and brought spiritual joys into view, thus leading to a nobler conception of the condition of the soul after death.

If the views of savage and barbaric peoples are traced back as far as possible it will be found that for a considerable period the idea of a future state was very simple. Apparently the new life was to be but little different from Ideas of uncultivated races. that spent upon the earth. But after a time there came into the conception of the new existence the idea of retribution. At the farthest point to which their beliefs can be traced these races appear to have supposed that as the good and the bad dwell together in this world they would continue to live in the same locality after death. But from some cause, whether from the natural instinct of justice, or from the fear which the better members of these rude societies must have had of the violent and depraved, is uncertain, this thought gave place to the idea of a separation of the evil from the good. The perceptions of right and wrong were far from clear, and the standard of admission to the ranks of the good in the other world was not very high, but it was a marked advance in morals to recognize the fact of accountability for the conduct of the present life.

Ideas regarding the situation of the home of the soul were widely different. Some tribes thought that it was upon the top of a mountain or high hill not far from the earthly habitation. Others thought that it lay beyond some Location of the new home. distant mountain peak. Many have thought it was far away to the west, while some, like the ancient Peruvians, believed it to be in the east. In fewer instances it was supposed to lie at some other point of the compass. Some have believed it to be upon an island, and some have supposed that the chiefs of their tribes would have a home in the sun.

The new home was often thought of as within or under the earth. This has been true even where no distinction has been made between the abodes of the good and those of the evil. But in some cases in which a difference has been supposed to exist, the subterranean abode was only for the wicked. The good found a home in a happy region far above the world.

Among primitive peoples there appears to have been a very

general belief that the journey of the soul to its final destination was difficult and dangerous. The idea that at some part of this journey a river must be crossed by walking upon a small and slippery log which was liable to roll and precipitate the traveler into the water was very common. A tribe in Brazil believed that the soul was carried to the new home on the back of a sorcerer who flew over the intervening space. On the way was a perilous pass which was guarded by a god who examined the soul in regard to the character which it had formed upon earth. If the inquiry proved satisfactory the journey was continued, but if not the god threw the soul down into a raging flood.

Some have supposed that the river which flows between the old home and the new must be crossed in a stone canoe which is propelled by some invisible power, and which will carry him safely if his life has been good, but will sink if he has committed any of the crimes which his tribe especially condemn. Others have thought the river must be crossed on floats made of cobwebs, while some have supposed that the point of danger in the journey was in a rocky defile the sides of which frequently came together and crushed any one who was caught between them.

Another belief, which has prevailed to some extent, is that the soul is carried to the world beyond by a small bird. If the earthly life had been upright the journey was easily made, but if not a hawk would appear and prevent further progress.

Some of the people of Greenland believe that at death the soul commences a journey to the centre of the earth. After a time a rocky defile is entered, down which the soul must slide. This part of the course requires about five days to traverse, and painful injuries are sustained by the soul while passing down the decline. But when the place of destination is reached troubles of every kind are at an end.

The early Mexicans held that the journey of the soul was attended by many and great dangers. The winds to which it was exposed were sharp and penetrating, raging storms were encountered, deep waters were crossed, and terrible monsters, which must be avoided or overcome, were encountered.¹

¹ A very full and interesting account of the beliefs upon this subject of the aborigines of North and South America may be found in *The Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, by R. M. Dorman.



1253

佛堂 三十三
THE HALL IN ASHIKAGA
KYO

JAPANESE TEMPLE OF THE 33,333 GODS.

Among many savage and barbaric peoples various rites and ceremonies have been observed by the survivors to aid the soul of the departed in making its final journey. Some, *Help given by surviving friends.* too, have thought that if these observances were neglected the soul must for a considerable time wander about its old home where it would not only be miserable itself but would make its friends unhappy.

Certain tribes of Indians in North America lighted a fire at night upon all newly made graves. With some it was customary to keep the fire burning longer upon the graves of the wicked than upon those of the good, as they thought the former would have a longer and more perilous journey than the latter, and would therefore need assistance for a longer period. Others appear to have made no difference in this respect, but to have kept the fire burning the same length of time for all. In the "Song of Hiawatha," Longfellow thus refers to this custom:—

"Four days is the spirit's journey
To the land of ghosts and shadows,
Four its lonely night encampments;
Four times must their fires be lighted.
Therefore, when the dead are buried,
Let a fire, as night approaches,
Four times on the grave be kindled,
That the soul upon its journey
May not lack the cheerful fire-light,
May not grope about in darkness."

Some Indians practiced burying their dead in the morning, and thought that the soul would reach its destination and find its relatives and friends before night. In Lapland a flint was put into the grave to enable the deceased to light his way to the new home.

Where somewhat less crude notions have prevailed efforts of other kinds have been made to help the soul in its last great journey. In some parts of Europe the peasants opened a window when a person was dying in order that the soul could leave its old home without delay. A piece of money was placed in the mouth of a dead person so that the needs of the soul might be supplied while the journey was being made. A similar idea was held by many of the Greeks. Before they buried a body they put a piece of money into the mouth for the ferryman who was to take the soul over the river Styx, and a cake made of flour and honey "to appease the fury of Cerberus, who guarded the entrance into hell."

In Russia some of the ceremonies were of a religious nature. Before a body was buried a passport for heaven was made out, signed by some official of the church, and placed between the hands of the dead. At the grave prayers, which were supposed to help the soul in its journey and enable it to reach its destination, were offered by the attending priest.

Religious ceremonies.

It is supposed that, in some cases at least, where cremation was practiced in early times instead of burial, this method of disposing of the body was followed in order to help the soul reach its home. If the soul remained in the body after death fire would certainly set it free. And it was not difficult for men who lived so largely in the world of nature to imagine that the soul would be carried to the sky upon the cloud of smoke that was formed by the fire in which the body was consumed.

Cremation.

People of uncivilized races appear to have thought that when the soul completed its journey many of the old conditions of life would be resumed. Therefore they not only did many things for the purpose of aiding the soul while the journey was in progress, but they also endeavored to furnish it a proper equipment for life and work in its new home. The weapons and implements which the deceased had used in life were laid upon, or put within, his grave in order that he might continue to hunt and fish, or to carry on his old employments, in the country to which he had gone. Other articles which he had prized were also placed near the body so that he might not be deprived of them in the new life. It was supposed that all of these things had souls which the soul of the man could use while the forms of the things and that of the man remained in or near the grave.

Equipment for the new life.

Among some peoples when a king or a powerful chief died his wives and a number of his servants were killed so that the rank and conditions of this life could be continued. Children, too, were sometimes put to death to keep the parent from being lonely in the new place of abode. In early times when an Arab died his best camel was fastened near his grave and left to perish, so that its master would not be deprived of its services, and, for a similar reason, some Europeans killed the horse of a warrior near his grave. Perhaps the most pathetic custom of this

kind was that adopted by a tribe in Greenland who buried a dog in the grave of a little child, not only to furnish it company, but also that it might lead the way, which, perhaps, the little one could not find unaided, to the home of souls.

Though often manifested in a useless and grotesque manner, this regard for the departed, and desire to aid them in the journey beyond the grave, shows a kindly feeling in the hearts of even the lower races of men. It is true *Expression of a kindly feeling.* that in some instances services have been performed in part for the protection of the living, but even then there was also a desire to benefit the dead, and it is probable that in the great majority of cases this has been the principal if not the only motive. The feeling is in marked contrast with much that is commonly associated with a savage state, and, appearing as it has, during many ages and in widely separated parts of the world, it is an indication that there is much that is good even in degraded humanity.

Leaving the savage races, we find, among the civilized nations of antiquity, the expression of an elaborate belief regarding the journey and destination of the soul after death in the works of the Egyptians. It must be noted, how- *Views of the Egyptians.* ever, that the views of this people were not the same at all periods in their history. Frequent additions appear to have been made to their great ritual, the "Book of the Dead," and these did not always harmonize with the older text. Still, the people seem never to have lost a belief in an existence of some kind after the soul had left the body.

The preservation of the body was regarded as of the utmost importance, as upon this very largely depended the life of the soul. Some held that if the body was allowed to decay the soul would waste away. In any case the dissolution of the body would be a great disaster. Consequently, embalming, by which the body could be preserved indefinitely, was a universal practice. During this process, which occupied several weeks, the soul was believed to be either dead or in a deep sleep. But when the body was prepared for its reception it returned.

Extracts from the "Book of the Dead" were placed by the body, and buried with it. These were to guard the soul against the evils to which it would be exposed and to enable it to answer all questions that might be asked, as well as to use effectively

all needed charms. In the case of poor people these extracts were brief. For the rich, where more expense could be afforded, they were often very elaborate. They were written upon papyrus and kept practically ready for use by the scribes and embalmers. All that was needed in any given case was to select one of the proper length, and, in the blank space which had been left for that purpose, write the name of the individual in whose behalf it was obtained.

The Egyptians believed that the soul, like the body, was composed of different parts. Of these some were superior to others, and, for a time at least, were capable of a separate existence. Consequently, when the term "soul" was used it did not necessarily mean all of the man except his body, but might indicate one of the various elements of the higher nature.

The removal of the mummy to its final resting-place was attended with many ceremonies. After it had been accomplished, some part of the spiritual man, in this case called the soul, was supposed to escape from an opening which had been left in the tomb for that purpose. It then sailed in the bark of the god Osiris to a place at which an examination of its merits was to be made.

If the first test to which the soul is here subjected proves unsatisfactory it is condemned to enter a new body, to be tormented by the mind, and in various ways to go through a long process of degradation which, apparently, could only end in utter destruction. But if the test proves successful the soul gathers its separated members and returns to the mummy. Then follows a period of existence which is in the nature of a probation and which is beset with dangers of various kinds. These dangers must be overcome by the aid of the restored faculties of the soul and by following the directions quoted from the "Book of the Dead." The way is long and weary, venomous creatures often appear, evil spirits assail, and monsters of terrible appearance constantly guard the gates through which the soul that is to reach the goal must pass.

During this terrible journey the soul has been growing purer, and when the end is reached it has attained a stage at which it receives justification and is publicly proclaimed to be worthy of eternal life. Then under the happiest of conditions the earthly employments are resumed in the heavenly fields. The wheat

reaches a height of seven cubits, of which two cubits represent the ear. The labor is light and many helpers are provided. Feasting and singing occupy much of the time. If it tires of this life the soul can use the power which enables it to take various forms, such as those of a dove, a heron, a hawk, or a lotus flower. Or it can become a spirit of light, and range at will "over the vast region where the stars forever shine."¹

The ancient Assyrians believed that after death the soul remained near the body from which it had been separated, and was sustained by the offerings of food and drink Belief of the Assyrians. which were made to the dead. At an early period there was a marked change in their views of the destination of the soul. They came to think of the dead as prisoners of the cruel goddess Allat, who reigns with the god Nergal over a gloomy region far away from earth. In this vast inclosure, surrounded by seven walls, suffering from hunger and thirst and cold, the souls of the dead remain in hopeless misery. This doctrine, in time, gave way to a higher conception of the future life and to a belief in a more merciful treatment of departed souls. Instead of consigning all men to a realm of unbroken darkness and unending despair, the teachers came to think and assert that the souls of the great and good would reach a land in which life was to be crowned with joy. Gradually they came to include in this happy number all those who had offered proper worship to the gods and had lived well while upon the earth. They believed that while the funeral services were being performed the soul made its journey to its heavenly home which lies far away to the southern extremity of the universe upon the summit of the "Mountain of the World."²

The followers of Zoroaster believed that at the coming of the dawn which follows the third night after death the soul, whether righteous or wicked, enters a way which was made The teachings of Zoroaster. by Time and upon which there is a holy bridge. At the head of this bridge it seeks a reward for the good deeds of the earthly life. If the good in the life of the petitioner has been greater than the evil, a fair maid, with dogs at her sides, makes the soul rise to the home of the gods upon the heavenly mountain from which goes forth the rising sun. If evil, instead

¹ Mariette, *The Monuments of Upper Egypt*.

² Maspéro, *Ancient Egypt and Assyria*.

of good, has been the rule of life, the soul descends to a place of darkness and suffering. Those in whom the good and evil appeared in equal proportions were sent to an intermediate realm to await the decision of a final judgment.

According to some interpretations, the bridge which the soul was compelled to cross was directly over hell. When the righteous attempted to pass over it there was an increase in its width which enabled him to proceed in safety, but when a wicked soul tried to make the journey the bridge became as narrow as a thread, and caused the traveler to fall into the abyss beneath.

The decisions which were reached at this trial of the soul were not final. Some have thought that souls which were condemned to an intermediate state underwent a process of purification, and when this was completed were admitted to the full glory of the Zoroastrian heaven. Possibly this doctrine is a later development which was grafted upon the ancient faith. But the older view did not look upon the punishment of even the worst soul as everlasting. For the general order of the world was to come to an end in twelve thousand years from its beginning,¹ when a universal restoration to happiness would be effected.

The early Hindus believed that when the body was laid in the grave, or was destroyed by fire, the soul, if cleansed of its sins, was given wings upon which to fly to the spirit land in which all souls had their home before they were born into this world. In their flight they crossed the stream of eternity, and at the entrance to the home of the blessed they were obliged to pass two ferocious dogs, which allowed only those who were pure to pass through. In this new home the light never grows dim, and the spring of purest water never fails. Here no sickness can enter, no sorrow can come. All the longings of the soul find complete satisfaction, and the whole being is filled with delight. But the souls which had failed to render homage to the gods, or which had lived in sin, were sent to a region far below, where they were compelled to remain in darkness as long as life was continued. As to the duration of this period nothing is certainly known. Some have thought that the soul was soon annihilated. Others have believed that its existence was continued, either for a long indefinite period or perhaps forever.

The early Hindu view.

¹ W. R. Alger, *Doctrine of a Future Life*.

In the development of the later philosophies of the East, the comparatively simple belief of the Hindus of earlier times passed through great changes. It received so many additions and modifications that it became, to all intents *The Theosophical belief.* and purposes, a new system. The doctrine of transmigration of souls was at first merely an addition, but in time it came to be one of the chief principles of the faith. Then, too, in place of the eternal joy which the pure soul was to experience forever in a heavenly home, there came a desire for the extinction of the personal life in a union with one of the gods. These beliefs still hold the leading place in the Theosophical System, which may be regarded as the leading modern exponent of the occult faiths of the Oriental world.

According to this philosophy there is a great astral region in, around, and even penetrating the earth upon which we live. It is not ruled by the laws which govern the physical world, and its inhabitants are not subject to the conditions regarding time and space which here prevail. This region is Kama loka, the place of desire, and here the soul goes through a process of education or purification to fit it for advancement to a higher state of being.¹

In an article on "The Conditions of Life After Death,"² Mrs. Annie Besant has given a quite elaborate statement of the present Theosophical belief regarding the journey of the soul and its final destination. In common with the Christian faith, and the doctrines of certain other religions, this system teaches that the character of the life here has a powerful influence in determining the condition of the soul after the separation from the body which occurs at death. But in various other respects there is a marked contrast between the theories which it advances and the beliefs commonly held by those who do not accept its principles and interpretations. Some of the points which are of special interest in this connection, and which have been elaborately treated by Mrs. Besant and other Theosophical writers, will be noted.

At the time of death the soul leaves the body which it has used through life, but it does not go forth as a pure spirit. On the contrary, "it is clothed in a violet-gray body," which is

¹ William Q. Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy*.

² *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1896.

formed of ethers, or of matter rarer than any of the gases with which we are familiar. In this body it remains, usually in a dreamy state, for only a few hours. Then, escaping from all earthy matter, it enters Kama loka, or the astral plane of existence. This corresponds to the hell of some forms of religion, to the intermediate state of others, and, perhaps more closely than to either of these, to the purgatory of the Roman Catholic faith.

In this new home of the soul there are a large number of conditions or spheres, some say not less than one hundred thousand; but there are seven which are regarded as of the principal importance; the others, apparently, being intermediate. Which of these regions will be entered is determined by the character of the astral body into which the soul passed when it left the first body with which it was provided after death. The seven regions differ from each other in respect to the condition of the forms of matter of which whatever exists in them is composed. In some the matter is much more dense than it is in others. This fact prevents intercommunication, as well as furnishes an infallible indication of the place in which each individual soul will find its home. For the astral bodies are composed of the same kinds of matter as the forms which exist in the seven different regions, and they must go where the matter is dense or rare, according to their own composition. As the bird seeks the air and the fish the water, so the soul in the astral body seeks the conditions for which it has become fitted by the discipline and experience of earth.

The soul that has, while on the earth, indulged in sensual pleasures, given full rein to passion, and has passed a coarse, animal existence, goes to the seventh or lowest region of the astral plane. Here the conditions are terrible beyond description. The air is thick and heavy. Darkness forever reigns. Passion and fury are let loose; and the rage of the souls here brought together knows no bounds. These souls are also able to exert an evil influence upon people still on the earth, and at times they visit dens of iniquity and urge their inmates on in crime. But as the loss of their physical bodies prevents their own continuance in the vicious practices to which they were accustomed, their evil passions are gradually worn out, and the soul proceeds to another division of the astral region.

The sixth, fifth, and fourth regions have some resemblance to

earth, and differ from each other mainly by becoming less gross as progress is made. Souls which were largely subject to the lower nature, but not absolutely depraved, and those which were mainly employed with the trivial things of life, are here detained until they overcome or surrender these earthly desires.

In the third region may be found souls whose general conduct had been good, but who were wanting in knowledge and liberality in religious belief. They construct houses and establish churches and schools from the astral materials, and make for themselves the kind of heaven which they looked forward to while on earth.

The second region is peopled by souls who were more cultured than those of lower planes, but who were selfish in the use of their talents, or who failed to reach a high plane in the religious life. They here undergo a process of education and refinement which will fit them for an advanced state of being.

The first region has for its inhabitants intellectual souls who have been engrossed with materialistic affairs and have given too little thought to spiritual things. Here the conditions are not such as to cause suffering, or even great discomfort, though wanting in the freedom and joy of a higher state of being.

The process of purification and development which goes on in the seven states which have been described is not necessary for all souls. If the earthly life has been without reproach, and the soul has gained complete mastery over the body, no further trial is required. Then, if it surrenders its desires for life on the earth, and is not disturbed by the mourning and longing of its friends, it passes into a sleep which is cheered by "rosy dreams," and which is continued until the astral body disappears. How long a time will be required for the dispersion of the elements of the astral body is uncertain; but from the teachings of various Theosophical writers it may be inferred that, though in some instances it may extend over a long period, yet in the case of those who do not have to undergo a process of discipline or education it is completed in about thirty-six hours. When the last vestige of the astral body is gone, the soul has a brief period of unconsciousness, and then awakes to the bliss of devachan.

The term "devachan" is used to denote the place or state which corresponds to the heaven of the Christian and the place of rest and reward of various other religions. It is described as

“a specially guarded part of the vast world of the mind.” Here, having risen through the physical and astral planes, the soul finds its true home. Here it is watched over by high spiritual intelligences, and is shielded from sorrow and evil of every kind.

The soul has in this state what is known as its mental body. This is the organism through which the powers of the mind are manifested. It partakes of the quality of the soul and becomes more beautiful and more perfect as the soul increases in knowledge and power. In the process of development it becomes a truly glorious body which covers the real body of the soul which St. Paul designates as the “spiritual body,” and which endures through all the changes of the existence of the soul.

Like the astral region, the place of happiness has seven principal divisions. Of these four are classed as the lower and three as the higher states. In the former, the mental powers predominate. In the latter, the nobler functions of the soul are called into active exercise.

The seventh region is the lowest of all. It is inhabited by souls of narrow breadth and small development but which were devoted to their families and friends and were sometimes unselfish in their affection. Here progress is slow but happiness is complete to the extent of the limited capacity for enjoyment.

In the sixth region are gathered the souls of those who while on earth were seekers after God. Worship is the chief occupation. Here what they sought under widely differing names on earth is found, and each soul is filled with ecstatic joy.

The fifth region is the home of souls which while in the world not only led upright lives but were also helpful to their fellow men. Here they grow wiser and better and become fitted for more efficient labor for the welfare of the race when, in new bodies, they return to live again upon the earth.

The fourth region is by far the most attractive of the lower spheres. Here are found the souls of those who in their lives in this world were the great moral and intellectual leaders and teachers of men. In their new home they continue to guide and instruct the souls which they influenced while here. The ambitious ones, too, who never reached their ideals and who were unable to carry out their plans for usefulness, are in this sphere and are developing their powers for employment in a later stage of being.

In the sublime height of the third region the soul is for a time in an embryonic state, but it gradually develops, making use of all that was valuable in its former states of existence and coming at length to a clear perception of the truth.

The second region is marked by the rapid development of the intellectual and moral character. Here souls have a memory of the past and are able to form opinions concerning the future. They are in close fellowship with other souls of a similar state of development. They will live noble lives when they return to earth, and will never lose the powers which they have attained.

The first region is "the highest of the heavens." Here the souls of the masters and initiates are gathered. Here is the source from which the loftiest intellectual forces of the earth are drawn, and here all that is pure and noble and majestic in the human soul finds its complete development.

With the exception of those who while on earth never cared for any but themselves, and who had no aspiration for life above the purely physical plane, the Theosophical philosophy teaches that all souls will eventually rise to a heavenly state. But it is worthy of note that for those who do not live well here this final destination of the soul is only to be reached through long periods of severe discipline. For all such the journey from earth to the home in which peace is found is unutterably painful and wearisome.

In the early period of their prominence as a people the Greeks held a gloomy doctrine concerning the place and condition of the soul after it left the body. To them this world was home. Existence here was the only life which they believed to be worth living. All beyond was dark. Yet they did not look for or hope for annihilation. They preferred a life that was, according to their own conceptions, far from desirable, to the alternative of utterly perishing. And so their philosophers taught, and it is probable that the majority of the people believed, that, while life upon earth was the supreme good, there was something in man that would not perish at death.

*Theories of the
Greeks.*

When death came as the result of natural causes the soul was supposed to depart with the breath, but when the warrior died from injuries received in battle his soul passed from his body through the open wounds.

There was no joy or triumph in the final hour. No light shed its beams upon the course beyond, and no hope cheered the traveler as he entered upon his journey into the unknown world.

After its reluctant parting from the body, and its crossing of the river Styx, the soul was supposed to fly to a world which was the common home of the dead. By some writers this was thought to be in the centre of the earth. Others located it below the world, and some believed it to be far away to the west. In this world the soul came under the power of deities who were unfriendly to mankind.

In various respects the new home was a marred and meagre picture of the one upon earth. There were plains, and rivers, and trees. But instead of fertility there was barrenness; in place of the refreshing waters of earth the streams were filled with sorrow, and hate, and fire. Even the trees were of an inferior variety. The whole attitude of nature was regarded as unfriendly.

Another element of misery was found in the darkness which constantly prevailed, and which was expected to continue in this great home of departed souls.

“ There, as 't is given out,
Or Night forever sleeps, untimed, unvoiced,
And, in o'erspreading darkness shadows grim
Grow dense.”

But, dismal as were their surroundings, the physical and mental condition of the inhabitants were still more pitiable. There was a bodily form, but it was thin and unsubstantial. In a shadowy way the employments which had been followed upon earth were continued in this region of gloom. At times intelligence and interest revived for a brief period, but with these exceptions existence was vague and unreal except in its hopeless weariness. Even the rulers of this great realm were subject to these appalling conditions, yet they were as powerless to escape as were the weakest of its inhabitants. The lot of the poorest laborer upon earth was regarded as superior to that of the mightiest sovereign of the dead.

Nearly all of the early Greek literature which bears upon this subject teaches a common doom for all. Only a few passages indicate a belief in either rewards or punishments for the deeds

of good or ill which had been performed in this world, and some of these are believed by leading Greek scholars to be of a later date than the body of the text in which they appear. It is claimed, also, that some of the statements which have been supposed to teach the doctrine of retribution were not accurately interpreted.

Whatever may be true of isolated passages, the fact remains that the general teaching of this period was that moral character had nothing to do with the future state. Souls of the good made the same journey and arrived at the same destination as the souls of the wicked. The evils of the underworld were regarded as the natural and inevitable outcome of removal from life in this world. If good was rewarded and evil was punished it was before, not after, death.

At a later period there came into the Greek philosophy the idea of justice in the future life. But this thought was developed very slowly. For a time it had reference only to the extremely wicked. Great offenders were selected for special punishment. Their tortures were of the most terrible description, and no hope of relief in the future was offered. But the great mass of souls were not affected by this change.

The idea that a good life upon earth would be rewarded hereafter appears to have come still later than that of punishment for an evil course of conduct. When they began to picture happiness in the future, the Greek writers did not present it as the reward of virtue, but as the special gift of the gods. Here, too, the masses were not considered. The gods cared nothing for them. Joy was bestowed upon only a few who were chosen because they had either sustained a mortal relationship to the gods or had in some manner secured their good-will. The favored ones were taken to their new abode without passing through the gates of death.

The glaring injustice of the conditions which have been described at length led to a belief that all of the wicked would eventually be punished, and all who were good would be rewarded. Hades, the world of departed souls, was divided into three parts: Erebus, where all were obliged to appear for judgment; Tartarus, in which the wicked were confined and punished; and Elysium, where the good were to find perfect happiness.

In Erebus were judges who passed upon the merits of all who entered Hades. At first there were three, Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Æacus, but at a later period Triptolemus was added to their number. Before some one of these each soul must appear. The judges were wise, upright, and absolutely impartial. They sentenced the wicked to Tartarus, where fearful and continuous punishment was to be endured. The good they admitted to the Elysian Fields, lying far away to the west, where perpetual summer reigns, the breezes are constant and refreshing, the flowers forever bloom, and life is an unfading and an unending scene of delight. According to some of the later legends, however, the dead were permitted to drink of the waters of the river Lethe, which caused them to sink into utter oblivion.

How far the views of the philosophers influenced the common people of their times it is impossible to say. Most of the works in which ideas of the future life were set forth were poetical, and dealt largely in fictitious scenes and events. By many of the scholars of the time they were looked upon as mythical, and it is probable that the masses were not very strongly influenced by works of which they knew but little and which many of them at least did not understand. Still, the fragments of this literature concerning the future life which became available to them probably did something toward awakening or strengthening a hope that, for the good at least, death would not prove to be either the end of existence or the gate to eternal misery.

In respect to the destiny of man the belief of the Romans closely corresponded to that of the Greeks. There was the same diversity of opinion and the same wavering between faith and doubt. There were periods in which belief in a future life declined to a very low point, and others in which hope became stronger and seemed to prevail. But the general teaching of their literature, and the tone of the inscriptions upon their tombs, is to the effect that man finds his true happiness in this world. What lies beyond the change wrought by death is a profound mystery. Whether the soul perishes as it parts from the body, or journeys to some realm which mortal vision has never penetrated, is wholly unknown. And if it survives, the place and condition of the soul are matters upon which their philosophy could give no clear light and

The Roman idea.

concerning which the gods whom they worshiped could make no revelation.

The belief of the ancient Jews had certain points of similarity with that of some of the Greek philosophers, though in other respects it was widely different. Both believed that the soul left the body at death and that it made a journey to a great underworld into which all souls came and in which they were, for a time at least, detained. Both believed that existence was shadowy and unreal, that the mind and the affections were absent or inactive, and that the home of this mere shade of the former man was a desolate region in which the deepest darkness prevailed. There was also substantial agreement regarding the relation of the departed soul to its former life. Although a few references and incidents appear to give a different view, the general line of teaching in the earlier and middle portions of the Old Testament Scriptures is that the dead have no remembrance of the friends whom they left in this world, and no interest in, or even knowledge of, earthly affairs.

Still another similarity of belief was in regard to an utter lack of moral distinctions. There was no idea of retribution in the world to which the soul went at death. The difference in the lot of the righteous and that of the wicked had reference, in a great majority of the cases in which they are contrasted, merely and only to this present world. When they were removed from earth the good and the bad went to the same place and were subject to the same conditions.

But while there was a great deal in common in their ideas concerning existence in the underworld, there was one respect in which it must have appeared to the Jews as far more disastrous than it did to the Greeks. This was in the thought of being cut off from all knowledge of and communion with their God. Thus David laments that "in death there is no remembrance of thee: in Sheol who shall give thee thanks?" It was supposed, too, that God would forget the inhabitants of this underworld. Even those who had loved and served Him on earth would be removed from his care. The author of the eighty-eighth Psalm speaks of himself as being utterly forgotten:

"Cast off among the dead,
Like the slain that lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more;
And they are cut off from thy hand."

And this appears to have been regarded as the common lot of the people of God.

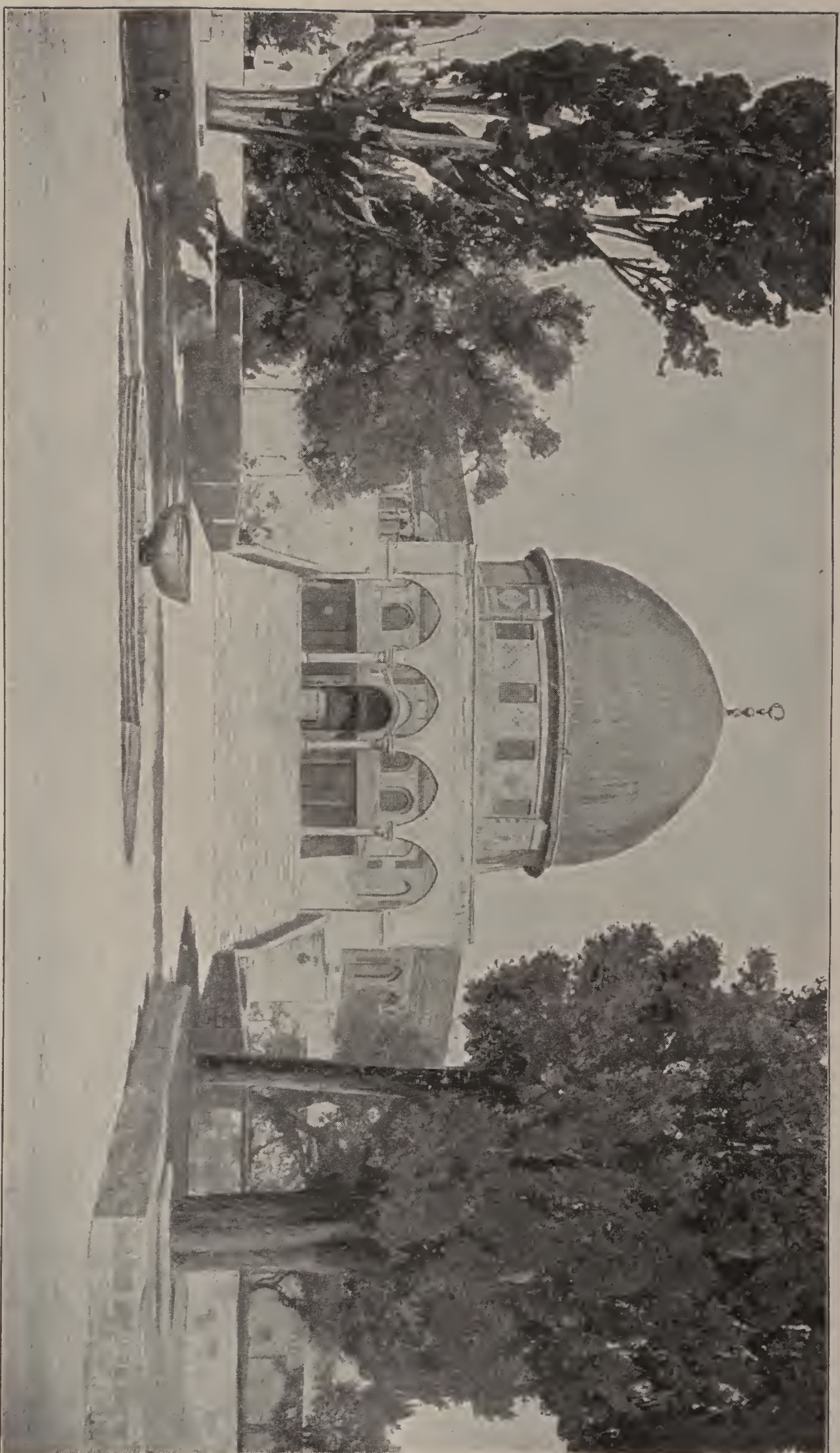
Yet it is probable that there was a hope, and among the more devout Jews an expectation, that the gloomy state of existence in Sheol, as this underworld was called, would come to an end and that it would be followed by a far happier condition. The covenants made with the patriarchs must have led the thoughtful mind to suppose that these great leaders, and the descendants who followed in their footsteps, would eventually be released from the abode which they entered at death. It seems certain that those who had followed the light which had been given would not look upon the meagre and helpless existence in Sheol as the end of their being and the final outcome of life. They probably regarded it as an unutterably dreary yet not an endless condition, and looked for a time when they would be delivered from all evil influences and surroundings. Then, free from all limitations of the earth and of the underworld, their souls would find "pleasures forevermore" in the immediate presence of God.

In the later books of the Old Testament light upon the future state of the soul becomes clearer, and a stronger hope of deliverance from Sheol is expressed. There was to be a ransom from the grave and a redemption from death. And yet the view is limited. Deliverance was supposed by the Jew of this period to be for his own race and people alone. Of a hope for mankind at large he knew nothing.

Among Mohammedans the journey and destination of the soul after death has been a subject of long-continued discussion.

*Mohammedan
teachings.*

Many opinions have been offered, and widely varying conclusions have been reached. There appears, however, to have been a common belief that the souls of the prophets immediately enter heaven. The souls of men who have given their lives for the defense of the faith are supposed to be inhabitants of the same happy abode, but to find their homes in the crops of birds who live in the heavenly land. Of the common people, those who pass an examination in the sepulchre, made by two dark angels who obtain from the dead a statement concerning their faith, are admitted to heaven. Those who have not been true believers are rejected at the heavenly gate and thrown into an abyss in which they undergo severe suffering. These conditions are supposed to last only until the



THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, ON THE SUPPOSED SITE OF THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

resurrection, which will be immediately followed by a general judgment. Then another test of belief and character is to be made in the presence of all human beings who have ever lived. Many, in all, hold that during this interval between death and the judgment all souls are in a state of unconsciousness, but the majority believe in a conscious existence immediately after death.

When the soul has received its sentence, it is required to pass over a bridge, which has one of its ends upon earth and the other in paradise, and which passes directly over hell—a test similar to that required of the followers of Zoroaster. This bridge is represented, as being “thinner than a hair, sharper than a razor, and hotter than flame.” Mohammed is supposed to lead the way. The righteous will cross with the quickness of lightning. The edge of the bridge will grow broad enough to be traversed with ease, and the wings of attendant angels will keep their sight from the great lake of fire over which the soul has to pass. Thus the faithful Mohammedan makes his journey to the paradise which is to be his final home. For the believer who has failed to reach the proper standard for admission to paradise there will be a punishment, the severity of which will be determined by his character, but which, in no case, can be eternal. Sooner or later every such soul will reach a state of blessedness in which he will forever remain. But for the unbeliever there is no hope. His effort to cross the bridge will be in vain. He will fall into the blazing fire, and his punishment therein will be everlasting.

During the interval, variously estimated as covering a period of from a little more than a century and a half to nearly four centuries, between the close of the Old Testament and the coming of Christ, the idea that after death the soul would enter a place in which it would be either rewarded for good or punished for evil, increased in strength. This may have been due in part to foreign influence, but was probably in a great measure the natural growth of a doctrine which commended itself to the intelligence of all, as well as satisfied the longings of religious people. Be this as it may, it is certain that when Christ appeared there was a widely spread belief that the soul survived death; that upon its separation from the body it went to some definite place, in which it continued its conscious existence;

and that the conditions of that existence were largely determined by the character of the life which it had passed upon the earth.

In the Christian faith this article of belief assumed great importance. Christ said but little concerning it in the way of detail, but He made it unmistakably clear that this life is merely a preparation for something which lies beyond, which is of supreme importance, and the conditions of which will be determined by the character which is formed before the soul leaves the body.

The doctrine of Christ.

The life, the work, the sufferings, and the death of Christ all had reference to the soul of man. According to His teachings the soul was the man. It could be saved or it could be lost. Its journey and destination were to be determined by the individual choice. The man who was saved might lose everything else, but his soul would be secure. The man who was lost might gain many things pertaining to this world, but his own being, his personal self, was a fearful ruin.

But while Christ taught all this, in the most solemn and emphatic manner, He did not enter into particulars regarding the place and condition of the soul in the interval between its departure from earth and the final and public determination of its destiny which He foretold. This absence of detail has led to differing views on the part of His followers. Many hold that at death the soul leaves the body and immediately enters either heaven or hell. This is the doctrine of Calvinistic churches. It is stated in the Westminster Confession as follows: "The souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." . . . "The souls of the wicked are, at death, cast into hell." Though at a later period they will be reunited with their bodies, the home and condition of these souls will remain fixed forever.

Differing views of Christians.

A large number of Christians believe that there is a great intermediate realm into which souls pass at death. Some hold that this consists of two divisions: Paradise for the good, and Hades for the evil. Many think that Hades is a place of discipline in which souls may be purified and fitted for a happier condition; and there are not a few who hold that Paradise is a place of education and development for souls which, though

having a degree of saving grace, are not fully prepared for heaven. Under their appropriate heads these views, together with the doctrine held by some that the soul is unconscious between death and the resurrection, and also certain other related beliefs, will be considered in a later portion of this book.

CHAPTER XVI

TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL

AMONG the various theories which men have held of the life and condition of the soul after its separation from the body, that of transmigration, or metempsychosis, as it was *A widely accepted belief.* called by the Greeks, is one of the most remarkable. It was one of the articles of belief of the ancient Egyptians, can be traced back to very early times in India, and has been found among many uncivilized tribes in widely separated parts of the world. For thousands of years it has been held by vast numbers of people. It has been introduced into philosophical as well as religious systems. At the present day most of its believers are found in Oriental lands, though it is held to a limited extent in both Europe and America.

The leading principle of this doctrine is that the soul of man, though set free from the body at death, will continue to live, *The doctrine stated.* either in another human body or in some other form of matter. The great majority of those who hold this theory believe that the process of change may be, and probably will be, repeated a great number of times before either a final state of being or an extinction of personality will be attained. But while this idea has always been a vital part of the belief of those who have held the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, there have been various important points concerning which there was a wide difference of opinion. The details of the doctrine have also varied greatly among the same people at different periods of their history.

This doctrine seems to have grown out of an older belief, which was very common among primitive peoples, that after *Origin of the doctrine.* death man was transformed into a member of the particular class of animals or plants which had been his "totem," or symbol of his clan or family, during life. Animals, and even trees and plants, were supposed by the savage races to have souls, and it was thought that these souls were

organized into societies or tribes like their own. It was customary to select some particular class of these spirits with which to form an alliance. For this purpose an animal, as the bear or wolf, was usually chosen. By this choice the man became a member of the totem animals' clan, and the animals of that class were joined to the savage clan. The animals also became objects of veneration, and in many, perhaps in most, cases were worshiped. Some savages even believed that they had descended from these animals. The totem animal was never hunted. The members of some tribes would not kill a bear, those of others always spared the crow, and so through a long list of the common animals, birds, and fishes. Each tribe carefully refrained from injuring an animal belonging to the class represented by its totem. When a man died he was supposed to join his totem again and take the form of the animal which it represented. This transformation appears to have been considered both a duty and a privilege. The close union of men with animals which was thus established would make acceptance of the doctrine of transmigration much easier than it could have been if the great difference which civilized people believe to exist between humanity and the brute creation had been recognized.¹

With the growth of the idea of rewards and punishments for the good or the evil done in the present life, the belief in the transmigration of the soul was gradually changed. *A modification of belief.* At first it became allowable for the soul to enter the body of some other animal than that of its totem. This was followed by a belief that a higher state of being might be in reserve for the good, and that only the souls of the wicked would have to continue their existence in the animal form. Still another element introduced into this strange doctrine was the idea that by means of the discipline which it would undergo in the process of transmigration, the soul would become purer and nobler, until at length it would reach such a state of perfection that it would be merged into the Divine Being and its existence as a separate personality would cease forever. From time to time other changes in the form of the doctrine, or additions to its original principles, have been made. In different places, too, it has been and still is held in somewhat different forms.

¹ F. B. Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*.

It was a quite common belief of the savage races that the souls of those who have died enter the bodies of infants when the latter are born. The bodies of animals, also, *Among savage races.* have been supposed to furnish homes for the souls of some who have departed this life. This appears to have been true at times, and in places, in which the idea of a direct alliance between men and animals was not especially prominent. In many cases the larger animals, birds, or fishes, were thought to be animated by human souls. Souls of men who were brave and good were supposed to find homes in the bodies of the better classes of animals than the souls of the cowardly and evil could enter. Among some tribes the idea prevailed that this process of transmigration must go on until the soul was qualified to go to the happy land to which the savage looked forward as the eternal home of the good.

The members of the sacred order of priests and teachers, known as the Druids, who governed the ancient Celtic people *Belief of the Druids.* in Gaul, the British islands, parts of Germany, and in neighboring regions, were firm believers in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. They regarded the process as necessary for the development of power and the perfection of character. It was also required in order that the good might be properly rewarded and the wicked be suitably punished. They also held that there is an ascending scale of life from the very lowest forms of existence to the highest point which it is possible for finite beings to reach. When in the course of the ascent the human plane is reached the future condition of the individual is placed in his own power. His conduct in this state of being will determine his state and place after death. If his life is pure he will when he dies enter a better home than any which the earth can supply. His powers will be greatly increased, and his means of enjoyment will be multiplied. If he proves unworthy of this high estate he will be obliged to return to a lower form of life, though ample opportunity to rise again will be given. But if he maintains his integrity he will continue to rise in the scale of being until he reaches perfection and, so far as he is concerned, all possibility of evil comes to an end.

If, while in the human form, the soul chooses evil instead of good, the birth which will follow death will be in the line of

degradation. The depth to which the soul will fall will be determined by the character of its sin, and the persistence with which that sin has been committed. It may be obliged to take the form of one of the meanest of all the animals that crawl upon the earth, and in this vile condition endure the penalty of its evil deeds. From this state it will rise, by degrees, to the human scale, and will then be given another probation. This, like the former time of trial, may be misimproved. If so, the soul must be punished by being compelled to pass through another degraded form of existence. This may be repeated indefinitely, but the soul will never be debarred from another trial, and, though the processes of purification and development may require countless ages for their completion, they will surely end in a glorious triumph of the good; and the admission of the spotless soul to a home in which its happiness will be perfect and eternal.

The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul was held in Egypt some four thousand years ago, and has been regarded as a prominent feature of the religious system of the people of that historic land. It is difficult, however, *The Egyptian theory.* to determine just the form in which the idea was entertained, as different writers have varied greatly in their interpretations. Doubtless some were either misled, or were not fully informed regarding the subject upon which they attempted to enlighten others. It is also certain that in process of time the belief underwent a change, or else it was held in different forms, by different classes of people, at the same period.

The account of Herodotus, which until recently has been generally accepted, was to the effect that the Egyptians were the first people who believed the soul to be immortal. They supposed that when a human being died the soul passed into the body of some animal that was then being born. At the death of this animal the soul passed into the body of another, and so continued to inhabit the bodies of creatures which live upon the earth, in the air, or in the sea. After this migration, which continues during a period of about three thousand years, the soul was given another probation in the human form. Certain Greek writers, it was claimed, had put forth this doctrine as their own, but it was really of Egyptian origin.

Some of the modern scholars who have made a careful investi-

gation of the subject believe that the ancient historian was mistaken as to the true character of the Egyptian doctrine. They hold that, in some very important points, it is radically different from the form in which it was held by the Greeks. According to their view the Egyptians did not regard transmigration as a punishment for sin. Neither did they consider it as reserved, as has often been stated or implied, for those who were not justified in the great trial of the soul by Osiris, the mighty god before whom all the dead were brought for judgment. On the contrary, it was a privilege of the good.

According to this view, the power of transformation was given to the soul as a means of protection against its enemies, and apparently, also, as a means of promoting its happiness. In the "Book of the Dead," the great funeral ritual of the Egyptian form of religion, is a chapter in which full instructions are given for making various transformations which may seem to be desirable. It was supposed that by following these instructions the soul could, at any time, appear in the form of a bird, a crocodile, a lotus flower, or even in that of a god. Another chapter of this strange book tells how the shades may attain perfection, and how they can obtain permission "to walk in the Great Room, to go out by day in shape that will please them," and do many other things which would tend to increase the pleasure of existence in the new conditions into which it had been brought upon its separation from the body by death.

It is not unlikely that the various discrepancies which have appeared in the statements of different writers upon this subject are due to the probable fact that during the long period of their history the views of the Egyptians underwent a considerable degree of modification. Doubtless what was an accurate statement of their views at one time was very far from correct at a much later period. It is also probable that among the people themselves there was, at times, a wide difference of opinion. The views of the educated classes would naturally change more readily than those of the people of less intelligence. The minds of the former class would be more open to the reception of new ideas than would those of the latter. So, while advanced views gained considerable headway, there were many of the common people who clung with great tenacity to the belief of an earlier day.

The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul appeared in the Hindu philosophy at an early period, and was very favorably received. In a comparatively short time it seems to have obtained quite general acceptance. After ^{Among the Hindus.} its introduction it passed through various changes, which involved a considerable degree of modification, before it reached its full development in a permanent system of philosophy. In its completed form it was very different from that in which it was held by the Egyptians, and the view of the future of the soul which it presented was far more terrible.

Not less than three thousand years ago the idea of transmigration had become a doctrine of pure and absolute retribution. Though to a certain extent virtue was regarded as meritorious, and was supposed to bring something in the nature of a reward, it could not insure permanent happiness. It would obtain for the new life better conditions than those which would otherwise have been granted. It might even secure for the soul a temporary abode in one of the heavens. If the latter were granted, the length of time which the soul could spend in the happy home depended entirely upon the degree of its merit. This might be so small as to make the period very brief. Or, if the life had been highly exemplary, several long periods of happiness might be granted in succession. But all the merit that had been accumulated would, sooner or later, become exhausted, and the soul would then be obliged, in some form, to return to earth and again go through the process of testing its character in order to determine the conditions under which its next birth should occur.

The possibility of entrance upon a state of happiness at death depended entirely upon an excess of good deeds over the evil deeds of the present life. If the evil deeds were in excess, the soul, at death, either entered a hell instead of a heaven, or was born, in the form of a man or an animal, in some wretched condition on the earth. As the period of happiness for the good was measured by the degree of merit which the soul had obtained, so the length of time that must be spent in misery by the wicked depended upon the degree of guilt for which expiation was required. In some cases a single evil birth would suffice. In others, countless numbers would be needed. Repentance for wrongdoing was of no avail, and reformation

counted for nothing under the reign of this inexorable law. Whatever of evil was done by an individual must be atoned for, either at once or after a period of happiness, during which time he received the reward which was due him for good works which had been performed in the course of the same earthly life. There was no possible escape from the natural consequences of wrongdoing. The full measure of suffering was exacted for each and every sin.

So the "endless chain of existence" went on. Sometimes the soul was in heaven; at others it abode in hell. Sometimes it lived as a god. More frequently it appeared in the human form. It often occupied the body of a dog, or a snake, or dwelt in an insect. It might even be compelled to exist for a time in an apparently inanimate object. Death would release it from the particular state in which it chanced at the time to be, but only that it might continue to exist in a state in which temptation would be certain and suffering would be extremely probable. This unceasing round of life and death, with all the dangers and sufferings which it involved, pressed with fearful weight upon the soul. The view which the future presented to the Hindu mind must have been appalling beyond description.

With such a view of life it is not strange that, far above all other things, believers in this form of the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul desired to find some way of bringing their personal existence to a close. Gradually the idea of the absorption of the human soul into the very being of the Deity was developed. Union with Brahma came to be regarded as the one, and the only, hope of salvation. This was to be secured by knowledge which would raise the one who attained it to the high position of a god, and would, for him, at once and forever close the processes of birth and death. The thing to be learned was that human individuality is not real, but only apparent. With the exception of Brahma, the one soul, nothing really exists. The Deity itself is knowledge, and whoever obtains true knowledge thereby becomes a part of, or loses himself in, "the absolute God." This knowledge, however, was exceedingly difficult to acquire, and only a favored few could hope to secure it. For the great masses of the people there was no possible means of escape from the woes of an endless series of births and deaths.

For several centuries before the birth of Christ, the idea of the transmigration of the soul was taught by various Greek philosophers, and was accepted by quite a proportion of the people who formed the more intelligent classes of the population. Indeed, it was said that at one period all Greeks who held that the soul was immortal were also believers in the doctrine of its transmigration. To some extent the idea was accepted by the Romans, but they did not give it as cordial a reception as had been accorded to it in Greece. *The Greek view.*

It has been a matter of common belief that the doctrine of transmigration as taught by Pythagoras was not original with that great philosopher, but was derived from the Egyptians. Probably this idea is only partly correct. It is certain that the doctrine as taught by himself, and as elaborated by some of his disciples, bears a close resemblance to the form in which, for a long time, it prevailed in Egypt. But it also has a sufficient number of variations to prove that it could not have been an exact copy.

According to the theory of Pythagoras, the soul came from the sky, and would eventually return to the place of its birth. On account of its wrongdoing in its earthly life it was doomed to be born again and again into the world. The form in which it would appear at any given birth was determined by the quality of the character which it had previously acquired. The cycle of being extended over a period of thirty thousand years. When this was closed, the last life of the series being in a human body, the soul was obliged to appear before Persephone, the Queen of the Dead, in order to be judged. After this ordeal was passed, the soul was permitted to enter a state of blessedness.

It appears that some souls, by their purity and goodness while in the body, avoided the perils and sufferings which were incident to, and inseparable from, transmigration, and at death were at once admitted to the home in the sky. But the great majority were not sufficiently scrupulous in regard to their conduct while upon earth to enable them to escape punishment and make it possible for them to enter the higher state of existence without first submitting to a process of purification and discipline.

Even when admission to the place of the blessed was secured there was no assurance that it would be the permanent home of

the soul. Probation was not yet ended. The soul was still free to choose good or evil. If it sought its pleasures in spiritual things all would be well. But if it allowed its attention to be diverted to material affairs, it was obliged to return to the earth and go through another course of training. The evil soul might be reborn as a depraved or ignorant man, or might take the form of an animal. In the latter case, the class of the animal, whether in the higher or the lower scale of being, would be determined by the degree of guilt which the soul had previously incurred. For all the sin that had been committed, punishment was inevitable. There was no forgiveness, and no part of the penalty was ever remitted. Yet, while it was obliged to reap as it had sown, the harvest time of the past would come to an end, and it would still be possible for the soul to develop a character of sufficient strength and purity to enable it to escape from the weary round of the earthly existence, and enter an enduring state of rest and peace.

Among the Jews the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul did not assume a definite form until a comparatively late period in their history. Glimpses of it appear much earlier, but it did not become an important article of belief until the time of the captivity in Babylon. There are but few passages in the Old Testament which can be quoted in its support, and some of these are not universally accepted as entitled to the interpretation which believers in this doctrine have placed upon them. It is certain that the belief was not common during the period covered by these writings. In the New Testament but very little support for the doctrine can be found, and, like the doubtful references in the Old Testament, most of the statements which are quoted in its defense can be readily explained without the slightest reference to this theory. But in the Talmud, and in various other Jewish writings of the same period, it is very prominent.

The form in which this doctrine was held by most of the Jews who accepted it was very different from that in which it had been adopted by other races. While it was far from being a doctrine of comfort, or of hope, it was free from the coarser and more repulsive features by which it had elsewhere been marked. Among the Jews it was generally believed that the rebirth would always be in a human form. Upon other points, however, there

were various opinions. Some held that in whatever body a soul found a home, it would remain therein until a separation was effected by death. Others believed that the soul had power to go from one body to another without the intervention of death. There was also an opinion that more than one soul could occupy a single body at one and the same time. The evil spirits with which many people were said to be "possessed," and from some of whom they were cast out by Christ, were believed to be the souls of people who were wicked while living in their own bodies on earth, and which for some unknown reason were permitted to return to this world and continue their sinful careers.

Regarding the period during which the process of transmigration would be continued, the Jewish belief was very different from that of the Hindus. The Jews believed that there would be, for members of their own race at least, a final and universal deliverance from the weary round of existence. With the advent of the Messiah, which was anxiously looked for, and the coming forth from their graves of the bodies of the dead, a new order of things would be instituted, and a permanent home for the soul would be established.

Although what is now known as the Theosophical movement is of quite recent origin, the parent society having been organized in the year 1875, the belief of its adherents regarding the transmigration of the soul is the same *The Theosophical doctrine.* in form as the doctrine which was taught by Buddha, and which has been held by the vast number of his followers down to the present time. It should, perhaps, be said in this connection, that while Theosophy claims to cover a much broader field than that which is occupied by Buddhism, and to include what is thought to be good in other forms of philosophy and religion, it "upholds most of the Buddhistic tenets," and its general belief is practically the same as "the real Buddhist creed."¹ There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of this statement. But the claim which is made by the writer just quoted, that the Theosophical system "is not only the Buddhist creed, but is also the same as the real Christian creed, and no more one than the other, and no more either than it is Chaldean or Egyptian," cannot be conceded by those who hold the vital doctrines of the

¹ Claude Falls Wright, *Modern Theosophy*.

Christian faith. While many precepts, which inculcate the purest morality, are common to both, there are many differences between the doctrines of Buddhism and those of Christianity, which are extreme and irreconcilable.

There has been a widely prevalent belief that the teachings of Buddha were of a much higher character than the doctrines of Brahma, which they were designed to supplant.

*The teachings of
Buddha.*

In some respects this was true. By a gradual encroachment upon the rights of the people, the Brahmanic priesthood became one of the most powerful and despotic organizations which the world has ever known. Its members claimed to be sacred beings. They built up a vast ceremonial, and made the distinctions of caste intolerable. The masses of the people had no rights which they could maintain in this life, and the future did not offer them the slightest ray of hope. Deliverance from the evils of existence could come only through knowledge, and this, in a sufficient degree, only a very few could by any possibility attain. From others sacrifices were required. The merits due for these offerings were determined by the priests, as were also the demerits which were incurred by neglect of suitable services of this description. Merit would insure a period of happiness after death, and demerit would, with an equal degree of certainty, bring a period of misery, but, whether it were good or ill, the condition then entered upon would not be permanent. After a period, the length of which would be determined by the quality of the character which had been formed while it was in the world, the soul would be born, in some visible form, and would again be exposed to the temptations and sufferings of an earthly life.

The historic character known as the founder of the Buddhist faith is said to have been born six hundred and twenty-three years before the Christian era.¹ Under the name of Gótamo he became a disciple of noted Brahmans, but, finding that their teachings could not enable one to secure deliverance from the evils of life, he went into seclusion, conquered all earthly desires, and became the Buddha, or, as this term implies, "The Enlightened One." He retained various doctrines of the Brahmans, but abolished the priesthood, dispensed entirely with the ceremonies and sacrifices which the priests had enjoined, over-

¹ Subhadra Bhikshu, *A Buddhist Catechism*.

threw the whole system of caste, and proclaimed the universal brotherhood of man. Instead of to the few, as the Brahmans had done, he offered deliverance to all human beings.

Still more radical changes of doctrine have grown out of the ideas which were introduced by this remarkable teacher. In all the varying forms in which the doctrine of transmigration had been held, a common belief in the *Changes of belief.* continued existence of the individual soul had been maintained. But, though efforts have been made to prove the contrary, some of the most learned students of the Oriental faiths assert that Buddha denied the existence of either the soul or of God. Among the adherents to his system there are many who fully admit the truth of this assertion, but many others claim that the statement should be somewhat qualified.

Upon the first of these points the Buddhist Catechism, from which quotations have already been made, says that "The belief in an 'immortal soul,' — that is, an undivided, eternal, and indestructible essence, which has only taken its abode temporarily in the body, Buddhism considers an error, resting upon ignorance of the true nature of being and existence." Regarding the second point, the same authority asserts that "the Buddhists reject altogether the belief in a personal God." If such views were held by Buddha, it is plain that, unless he had very different ideas of the nature of the soul from those which are commonly received, he could not have taught the doctrine of its transmigration. However that may be, there can be no doubt that millions of his professed followers have held it as one of the leading articles of their faith.

For the soul of man Buddha substituted what is now designated by the Sanskrit term, "karma," or the "law of adjustment," which insures reward for all that is good, and punishment for all that is evil, in character and action. It is sometimes described as the sum of all the thoughts and deeds of the earthly life. It is not a person, like God, who leads and guides the individual, but "an inner, innate power in the heart of every living being," from the operation of which escape is utterly impossible. In some of its aspects it appears to be allied to what is known as Providence. In others it closely resembles the doctrine of fatality. It has determined what each individual now is, and will determine, beyond all possibility of doubt or

change, the place and form of the existence which will follow death. Combined with *tanhá*, which is the desire, or will, to live, it compels a continuance of the process of transmigration. The exact nature of its action is, as Oriental philosophers concede, extremely difficult to explain satisfactorily to people of the Western world, whose minds are so engrossed in the practical affairs of life that they give but little time to the study of mystical doctrines.

If the existence of a soul is admitted, as it has been by adherents to various other forms of the doctrine of transmigration, it is possible to imagine a continuance of personality during the numberless states and stages of existence through which the individual must pass. It is said that Pythagoras claimed to remember many events which had occurred in his previous stages of life in this world. As an instance of this power of recollection, it is asserted that in the temple of Juno he once pointed out a shield which, while in another body and bearing a different name, he had carried at the siege of Troy. Various other noted persons have made equally remarkable claims.

Stupendous as they appear to those who do not accept the doctrine of transmigration, the claims which have just been noted are small when compared with those of the Buddhists, who assert that though there is no "eternal and indestructible essence" which can be called the soul, yet the real personality is transmitted from one being to his successor. Though the consciousness may change, we are assured that "it is, nevertheless, the same individual nature which commits the good or evil deeds in one birth and enjoys the fruits of its deeds in the new birth."¹

The form of continued existence thus described seems shadowy and unreal. But, faint and feeble as it was, Buddha regarded it as the greatest of evils. His highest aim and most earnest effort was to find some method by which it could be extinguished. The thing to be most desired was the utter eradication of personality, the absolute and eternal obliteration of all idea of a separate and individual life. The means of securing this entire effacement of personal existence he professed to find in a knowledge of, and obedience to, the laws of the universe; the cessation of all activity; and the extinction of

Existence an evil.

¹ Subhadra Bhikshu, *A Buddhist Catechism*.



STONEHENGE. MONUMENT OR TEMPLE OF THE DRUIDS.

all desire to live. When these conditions were complied with, Nirvana, the eternal rest, would be attained. Then, for the one who had reached this state, the chain of lives would be broken, never to be formed again.

This, however, has not been the uniform interpretation of the teachings of Buddha. Many of his followers have held that entrance into the state of Nirvana — for the word represents a condition, and not a locality — involved only a partial destruction of the idea of personality. They have asserted that it was not, as it certainly appears to be, equivalent to annihilation. In their explanation of the doctrine it is claimed that this state, in which the mind of the individual is transfused “into the universal soul essence,” “can be reached while the physical body is alive,” and that, in the case last named, after having attained this wonderful condition, the soul can return to the ordinary life of this world.¹ This would indicate that after the state of supreme happiness is attained some degree of individuality still remains.

While the teachers of Buddhism vary greatly as to the details of their doctrine, all are agreed that the merging of the human existence in the being of the One Soul of the universe is supremely desirable. This condition, when attained by those who have been completely separated from their bodies by death, would seem, to one not versed in the mysteries of Oriental philosophy, to be of limitless duration. But the great teachers of the esoteric doctrine assert that it is not everlasting. The atom representing the personality will again appear, but its state of being will be nobler and higher than it had previously enjoyed. The new cycle of its activity will be upon an elevated plane, and its powers will be wonderfully increased. Whatever else may be thought of this part of the system, there is not likely to be a disposition, on the part of any reader, to question the truth of the statement of the founder of the Theosophical Society, that, “in its present stage of development,” the human mind “can scarcely reach this plane of thought.”²

Some of the causes which led savage races to form the idea of the transmigration of the soul have been stated. Perhaps a few of the grounds upon which it appeals to people of higher intellectual powers should also be noted.

¹ Claude Falls Wright, *Modern Theosophy*.

² H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*.

Foundations of the belief.

The savage not only attempted to form an alliance with certain classes of animals, but he was also strongly impressed by the lines of resemblance, in action and sometimes in appearance, between animals and men, which such close observers of the natural world could not fail to notice. Doubtless these resemblances led him to value the totem more highly than he otherwise would have done, and strengthened the belief that the souls of his departed relatives and friends had not passed out of existence, but had found homes which were not far from his own.

As people became more intelligent the fact of resemblance in the appearance of certain animals and men did not receive as much attention as it had done at an earlier period in their history, though it was not wholly overlooked. There was a rapidly growing opinion that reincarnation in the form of an animal involved a degradation of the soul. After a time the idea became prevalent that only the souls of those who had been great sinners would be reborn in the form of any of the meaner animals, while a good soul was seldom, or never, condemned to exist in any lower form than that of humanity.

Another reason why this belief was accepted in the period before a clear revelation regarding the future had been given is to be found in the fact that it furnished a basis for the doctrine, which seems to be natural to the human race, of an existence after death. The idea of a purely spiritual existence was not developed until a later day. To the great majority of the people of early times life without some bodily form was supposed to be impossible. They believed that if the soul continued to exist after death it must have some sort of a material body. For people holding this belief it was easy to imagine that when the soul left one body it would enter another, and that, by various changes of this kind, the individual might continue to remain in the world for an indefinite time.

There were numerous other ideas which led in the same direction. But by far the broadest foundation which any of them offered for the doctrine of transmigration was the explanation which it was supposed to furnish for the apparent injustice which prevails in the world. The inequalities of the conditions under which men live are known to every one. They form one of the darkest problems of human experi-

Resemblance in appearance.

A continuation of life.

A remedy for unequal conditions.

ence. One man inherits great wealth and another is born in the direst poverty. So far as man can see, the former is no more deserving than the latter. One man has a vigorous body, a clear mind, and the best of opportunities for securing success; while another, whose moral character is equally good, is heavily handicapped by a weak constitution, bodily deformity, or an intellect of less than ordinary power, or he is so completely hedged in by circumstances over which he can have no control, that failure to accomplish anything of importance is inevitable.

In what are commonly termed the "favors of fortune" there is an equal want of adjustment to what seem to be the demands of justice. One man works faithfully, intelligently, and persistently, yet success eludes his grasp. Another, who puts forth less effort, and uses less care, seems to stumble upon the prize which his far more deserving competitor has missed. Accidents, sicknesses, and disasters of various kinds come frequently to some men, while to others, who are not better men and in many cases are very much worse, they are comparatively unknown.

Still more difficult to reconcile with justice are the multitudes of cases in which virtue is defeated and vice is triumphant. The history of the race is very largely a record of the results of conflict between the forces of good and the powers of evil, and that record has been such as almost to justify a literal construction of the words of the poet, —

*Adjustment of
moral wrongs.*

"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne."

It is not infrequently the case that calamities come to nations, to communities, and to individuals, without the slightest reference to the character of the sufferers. The good are afflicted as severely as are the evil, and, so far as outward things are concerned, all moral distinctions seem to be obliterated. The man who serves God fares as badly as does the one who denies the existence of a Supreme Being. Sometimes the balance even appears to turn in favor of the wicked, and the good seem to be not only overwhelmed with the troubles which have come upon them, but also to be deserted by the God in whom they had put their trust.

It is true that the condition which has been described is not universal. The good very often prevails over the evil. Perhaps it can be said that the general tendency of events is in the

direction of improvement. The world has not been deserted by its Maker, and there is no occasion to fear that it will escape from His control. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that evils of enormous magnitude are permitted to exist. As long as the existing order of things continues there will be inequalities in the conditions under which men live and toil, which can neither be justified nor explained by reference to anything connected with the present world. Without doubt there is a good, and an entirely sufficient, reason for this apparent unfairness, but at present it is involved in the deepest mystery. In order that we may obtain a view that will give anything approaching a justification for the moral derangement of the universe, and the innumerable and gigantic evils which proceed therefrom, we must either place implicit faith in the inspired declaration that God is love or else wait until we have a wider horizon than the brief term of natural life upon the earth affords.

It is at this point that the theory of the transmigration of the soul has its principal strength. It furnishes a plausible, though inadequate, explanation of the discordant state of the universe. The sufferings and misfortunes of good men, and the happiness and prosperity of wicked men, are said to be accounted for by this doctrine. When the righteous man is overwhelmed with evils it is assumed that he is reaping as he has sown in a previous life upon the earth. It is possible, too, that in addition to the expiation of past sins, he is laying up a store of merits the reward for which he will receive in some future state of existence. Sooner or later, according to this philosophy, "guilt and suffering, merit and happiness, must exactly balance one another." Therefore if we can find no good reason why a man who is a prey of misfortune should be obliged to endure the evils to which he is subjected, we must refer the cause to a course of wrongdoing in an earlier life.

On the other hand, when a wicked man is happy and prosperous, he is not to be regarded as a favorite of fortune, or as receiving a proper reward for his present works. He is simply enjoying the good which he had merited by a pure life at some previous time. He is not to be envied, for his happiness will pass away. Either during his present life, or in some succeeding one, he will be compelled to suffer the full penalty of all the evil deeds which he performs. As everything that is good will

receive its full measure of reward, so every thought and act of an evil nature must be punished to the uttermost limit of its desert.

Among the civilized peoples of Europe and America the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul has not been generally received. The features which cause it to appeal forcibly to the Oriental mind are not particularly attractive to the Western intellect. A very few of our philosophers have accepted the idea, and some have worked it out as a metaphysical theory. It has also found adherents in the converts to Theosophy, and their number is said to be constantly increasing. But there is no probability that it will become a popular doctrine. The explanation which it offers is not at all adequate. It traces suffering to sin, it is true, but it throws no light whatever upon the almost infinitely greater mystery of the origin of sin itself. It asserts the justice of the infliction of the penalty when man does wrong, but it does not show why he has been permitted to enter evil courses.

The doctrine deals with theories, and suppositions, and analogies. It belongs in the realm of psychology. Some of its claims are plausible, but in their development they prove superficial. They do not afford the only, or the most satisfactory, explanation of the mysteries which they attempt to reveal. When anything that can properly be called evidence of the truth of the theory is sought it cannot be found. It does not stand the test of science. "There are no facts to sustain such a doctrine."¹

Various Theosophical writers class Christianity with Brahmanism and Buddhism, and assert that these, in common with various other ancient systems of religion and philosophy, are all parts of the one "secret doctrine" in which the truth is contained. They claim that both Jesus Christ and Gótamó Buddha were members of a great brotherhood, and were "sent to teach the masses and to raise the standard of mankind."² It is also said that Christ probably "was a pupil of the Buddhist monks from His twelfth to His thirtieth year," and that, during this period, under their guidance He "attained the degree of Arahá." In His preaching, it is said,

¹ T. J. Hudson, *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*.

² Claude Falls Wright, *Modern Theosophy*.

*Not accepted in
the Western world.*

*Opposed to the doc-
trines of Christ.*

He proclaimed the truth, but his doctrine was "mutilated and confused with errors from the Book of Laws of the Jews."¹

These are most astonishing claims. They are not at all sustained by revelation and receive but very slight support from anything which can be called reliable tradition. The very few passages in the New Testament narratives which have been impressed into the service of those who claim that Christ countenanced the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul utterly fail to sustain the claim, and are easily and reasonably explained in other ways.

The claim that transmigration of the soul is necessary in order to insure perfect justice to each and every individual is pure assumption. One life in this world, followed by a state of existence in which good will be rewarded and evil will be punished, would seem to answer the purposes of justice far better than they can be served by a countless number of lives none of which are connected by memory with any preceding condition of moral responsibility. Even if we grant, what some assert but many deny, that a slight idea of individuality is retained through some of these various changes, we find that it is not sufficiently clear to enable the soul to commence any new probation with better prospects than it had previously been granted. When the soul enters another state it is simply exposed to renewed dangers without the slightest increase of strength for the conflict which it must wage against opposing forces.

Christianity teaches that man is dependent upon God. It asserts the weakness of humanity, and insists that this fact should be recognized and that the soul should seek a close and permanent union with Him by whom it was created and is still upheld in life. Such a doctrine cannot exist in connection with a belief in the transmigration of the soul. Even in its least objectionable form the latter theory widely separates the soul from God. As held by many, it regards man as his own maker and finds in knowledge and action the determining forces of life. It teaches that he has no need of prayer. In the Buddhist Catechism the unqualified statement is made that "Prayer and sacrifice in a literal sense do not exist in the Buddhist religion." In the Theosophical meetings which I have attended I have never heard a prayer. This is in

*Dependence upon
God.*

¹ Subhadra Bhikshu, *A Buddhist Catechism*.

marked contrast with ordinary religious services, and with the example and the teaching of Christ. He spent long hours alone in prayer, and taught His disciples to pray to their Father in heaven. But the Buddhist, in his philosophy, has no room and no need for prayer. He rejects the idea of dependence upon any power higher than himself. He claims a "religion, of a free, noble, self-confiding, human kind, that desires no divine grace, and that fears no divine anger, and only sees the judge of its actions in its own heart, in its own better understanding."¹

Then, too, the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul has for one of its leading principles the idea that existence is an evil, to escape from which man should bend all of his energies. Union with Brahma, with Buddha, with the One Soul, with the Over-Soul, or with some other spiritual existence which was regarded as the Supreme Being of the universe, was the one object which the believers in this doctrine passionately desired to attain. The absorption of the personality into the Divine nature, which would practically blot out all individual consciousness, was considered infinite gain.

Christ placed a vastly different estimate upon the value of personal existence. He declared that the purpose of His coming was that men might not merely have life, but that they might "have it abundantly." He was "the bread of life," "the living bread which came down out of heaven." He lived and toiled, and suffered and died, in order that a glorious and an endless life might be secured by men. He offered life as the one magnificent prize for the attainment of which every possible effort should be made. But in all of His teachings that have come down to the present day there is no intimation that the state of blessedness of which He told was to be reached by passing through a succession of births and deaths, at different periods, and in varying forms, in this world.

There is, too, an irreconcilable difference between the teachings of Christ and the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, in respect to an atonement for wrongdoing on the part of man. One of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is the forgiveness of sins. If this is eliminated the whole system of the Christian religion falls into ruin. But this doctrine is utterly and absolutely rejected by Buddhism and its

*The value of
existence.*

Pardon for sin.

¹ Subhadra Bhikshu, *A Buddhist Catechism*.

allied faiths. According to the principles of their philosophy, all causes produce their legitimate effects. If a man does wrong, either through design or through ignorance, he must suffer the punishment which that particular wrong deserves. He is powerless in the grasp of a law the penalties of which no power in the universe can either avert or mitigate. The relentless mills of retribution will crush and grind him in their terrible wheels. "No God or saint can protect a man from the consequences of his evil deeds. Every man must work his own salvation." All that Buddha, or any one else has done, or can do, is to show how each individual "can become his own savior."¹ Every man must tread the winepress for himself, and alone. No prayers, no repentance, no reformation, will aid him in the least. No power will discriminate between sins that were due to weakness, or to want of understanding, and those which proceeded from vile and malignant motives. It is a pitiless system; a doctrine of despair.

In contrast with this belief, the religion of Christ is as the sunlight of noonday when compared with the darkness of mid-night. The man who is weighed down by sin finds in Theosophy, and other systems of a similar nature, the command to save himself. But in the Christian religion he finds that One who is able and willing to save him has come into the world. Pardon and peace are freely offered through Christ. The name of this mighty One was to be called Jesus because He should "save His people from their sins." He did not come to inflict punishment, or to judge without mercy. His mission was "to seek and to save that which was lost." His life and death were manifestations of the wonderful love of God, and through the great atonement which He has made man may obtain forgiveness for the sins of the past and help to escape from the power and dominion of sin in the future.

The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul cannot be united with, or used as a supplement to, the system of Christianity. The principles of the one are radically different from the teachings of the other. Though not appealing to the highest motives, the Eastern philosophy is not devoid of merit. In so far as it insists that it is best, for the promotion of his personal interest, for man to live uprightly, it

The systems compared.

Union impossible.

¹ Subhadra Bhikshu, *A Buddhist Catechism*.

teaches well. But even where it does not go to the length of denying the existence of a God, and of an enduring, conscious personality, it presents a hopeless view of the future. Its doctrine concerning the soul, its insistence upon the evils of existence, and its rejection of the idea of a reconciliation between God and the sinner, make it a dismal failure as a religion for our suffering humanity. What it has done for the countries in which it has prevailed for thousands of years may be seen by the condition of the people in those countries to-day.

Where this philosophy fails, Christianity triumphs. It recognizes the soul as of infinite value. It presents life in this world as an opportunity for the grandest achievement, and offers a refuge from the threatenings of the violated moral law, in the love of God as exhibited in Jesus Christ. It has ennobled humanity by teaching every man, however lowly his station in life, that God is his Father and gives him a Father's love. It has given a mighty uplift to all the nations which have come under its power. By their fruits the merits of these conflicting systems must be judged.

*Superiority of
Christianity.*

Hieroglyphic text at the top of the page, likely a title or header.



OSIRIS PRESIDING AT THE JUDGMENT OF THE SOUL.

PART IV

ENDLESS EXISTENCE

CHAPTER XVII

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

So far as his body is concerned man is mortal. No argument is needed to fortify this assertion. The truth of the statement is plain enough to any one and every one. Evidences of its accuracy are all around us. It is worse Body and soul. than useless to attempt to deny, or even to modify, the conclusions to which they point.

Regarding the soul, no such sweeping assertion of mortality can be sustained. Comparatively few are inclined to claim that it is mortal. The great majority hold an altogether different view. Among them are many who are in doubt. They hope that death does not end existence. A vastly larger number are fully convinced that there is something within them that will not die.

The term "immortality" is employed in various ways, and is differently interpreted by people of differing philosophical or religious beliefs. As it is commonly used, the word carries the idea of unending existence. But some A definition. claim, and technically they may be correct, that this is not its exact meaning. They claim that "the word does not mean endless existence, nor indeed existence at all, but represents simply an undying *condition* of existence."¹ According to this view, there may be existence of endless duration, and yet this eternal persistence of life cannot properly be called immortality. Something more than a mere survival of the destruction of the body is required. Real immortality knows neither physical nor spiritual death as a permanent condition.

¹ J. L. Barlow, *Endless Being*.

Rigid scientific definitions have their uses. In many cases they are greatly to be preferred to the popular terms which are so generally substituted for them. But this work is not designed to be technical, and it seems best, in the present chapter, to use the word "immortality" in the sense in which it is generally employed, not only by the masses of the people but by writers upon religious subjects. At a later stage a modification of the commonly accepted doctrine of natural, or inherent, immortality will be considered, but at present the term will be used, as defined by the leading dictionaries, to designate an existence that is without end.

To the great mass of people the immortality of the soul is, in appearance as well as in fact, a subject of the deepest interest.

An intensely interesting subject. It is true that many do not investigate it thoroughly, and that some never appear to make it an object of special study. But it may be safely affirmed that every man and every woman of ordinary mental capacity, whether possessed of a Bible or without a knowledge of anything purporting to be a revelation from God, sometimes thinks of what may await the soul after it has been separated from the body by death. Immortality is far more frequently a subject of thought than it is a topic of conversation.

Probably the principal reason why the subject receives so little close study is to be found in the widely prevalent idea that pretty much everything which has to do with our knowledge of a future state lies in an unknown and an impenetrable realm. Many who fully realize that the subject is of vital importance to each and every member of the human race have a feeling that knowledge regarding it, though very desirable, cannot be obtained.

Much that is unknown. This view is partly true. There are many things regarding the future life which lie beyond our grasp, and which so far exceed the limits of finite intelligence that they would be of no benefit to us, in our present state, if we could reach them. But this is no more than what we are obliged to contend with in all lines of study. In every branch of science there are problems which no one can solve. Yet men do not abandon the study of science because they know that there are points which they cannot master. On the contrary, they give the most earnest attention to all of the principles which they can discover, and

they penetrate as far as possible into the mysteries which have thus far baffled all investigators. They fully realize that their powers and capacities are limited, but this fact does not in the least discourage them.

The same course should be pursued with reference to the doctrine of the future life. Though we cannot learn all about it, we should learn all that we can. Inquiry concerning such a subject is desirable for its own sake as truly *Should be investigated.* as it is for the information which it may be the means of securing. It turns the mind to the contemplation of a great theme and thus makes it nobler and stronger than it otherwise would become. Besides, there is reason for supposing that knowledge which will prove both interesting and useful will be obtained. The results of past investigations have not been small, and, as is the case with all other lines of study, the facilities for obtaining information are being greatly increased.

It is a remarkable fact that among men of all ages regarding which we have definite knowledge there has been an almost universal desire for permanent remembrance after the body has perished. This wish has been manifested *A general desire.* in various ways. Perhaps there is no more striking example than that of the kings of Egypt who built the magnificent pyramids for their tombs. Other monarchs, and numerous private individuals, of comparatively early periods, erected great and costly monuments to perpetuate their names and deeds. It is recorded that Absalom, one of the sons of the greatest king by whom Israel was ever ruled, "in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called Absalom's monument, unto this day."

In modern times the erection of expensive monuments by the living, to serve as a means for the perpetuation of their own names and the names of their families, is not at all uncommon. A far more desirable, and also more effective, method has been adopted by many wealthy men who have founded or endowed hospitals, colleges, libraries, and other public institutions which are of permanent and incalculable benefit to their fellow men. Then, too, there are various other ways, such as bestowing the name of the parent upon a child, in which an effort to keep

from sinking into oblivion at death is often made. This longing for an existence, at least in the minds of others, after the life upon earth has closed, is not always selfish. Many people desire immortality for those who are dear to them far more earnestly than they do for themselves. They wish to live hereafter, but they could endure the thought of losing their own personal existence far better than they could accept a decree that their loved ones should perish at death.

The idea that life continues after death has very generally gone beyond a mere desire or hope, and has become sufficiently developed to entitle it to rank as an established belief *A common belief.* in a future state of existence. An eminent authority has asserted that "man, if left to himself, has everywhere arrived at the conviction that there is something in man, or of man, besides the natural body."¹ There may have been a few exceptions, but they are hardly noticeable among the vast multitude of men who have looked for some form of life beyond the bounds of the present world. Speaking in a general way, it may be said that, no matter how widely separated as to locality, how different in intellectual capacity or culture, how great the difference in their manners and customs, or how bitterly opposed they may have been in their ideas upon other subjects, the belief of mankind has been that death does not bring existence to a close. It is said that in several languages the expression "he is dead" is carefully avoided, and in its place something equivalent to "he is taken away," "has gone home," or "has departed this life," is employed. And where less care is used in the form of the statement, there is often a great deal of "mental reservation" concerning the meaning of the words in which the fact that a person has died is expressed.

Belief in the immortality of the soul is not only common, but it is very largely intuitive. Millions of men have believed this doctrine whose education was so limited that they could present but very little in the way of argument in support of their position. There are also, to-day, millions of believers in the fact of a future life who could not, by any course of reasoning, make even a moderately strong case for the truth of the doctrine. Yet they are convinced, and they ought to be convinced, by the testimony of a witness within their own hearts and consciences,

¹ Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*.

that they will not perish at death. This witness is from the God who made the soul, with all its capacities for good or for ill, and its testimony cannot be shaken.

“ O listen, man !

A voice within us speaks the startling word,
‘ Man, thou shalt never die ! ’ ”

Not only has the idea of a future life been common to mankind, but as the mental powers of the race have been developed and knowledge has been disseminated, this thought has become clearer and stronger. What at first *A growing belief.* was hardly more than a desire developed into a hope, vague in its beginnings, but gradually changing from the idea of possibility to that of probability, and at length crystallizing into a settled belief. Advance in the knowledge of material things dispelled many ancient superstitions, but instead of destroying the idea of a future life for man, it has brought strong arguments for its defense. The more we learn about the works of God the more certain does it become that man, His greatest work, will not cease to exist when the brief term of his life upon the earth shall come to its close.

The case of the ancient Jews furnishes an excellent illustration of the growth of the idea that man does not perish, or sink into practical nothingness, at death. At first the light is dim. The earlier books of the Old Testament offer but little hope of a future life. Indeed, there are numerous passages in these writings which, if taken by themselves, seem to teach that, so far as man is concerned, death ends existence. In many of these cases, however, the context greatly modifies the meaning which the isolated statement appears to convey. And some of the texts which have been quoted to prove that the Old Testament teaches that there is no existence beyond the grave are purely ironical. Others refer to the matter as it appears from an earthly standpoint at the time of death. They merely state that, so far as appearances are concerned, man and beast alike perish in the hour of dissolution. Still other passages indicate that without the aid of revelation man cannot find satisfactory proof of his immortality. If left to itself the mind will vacillate between hope and fear.

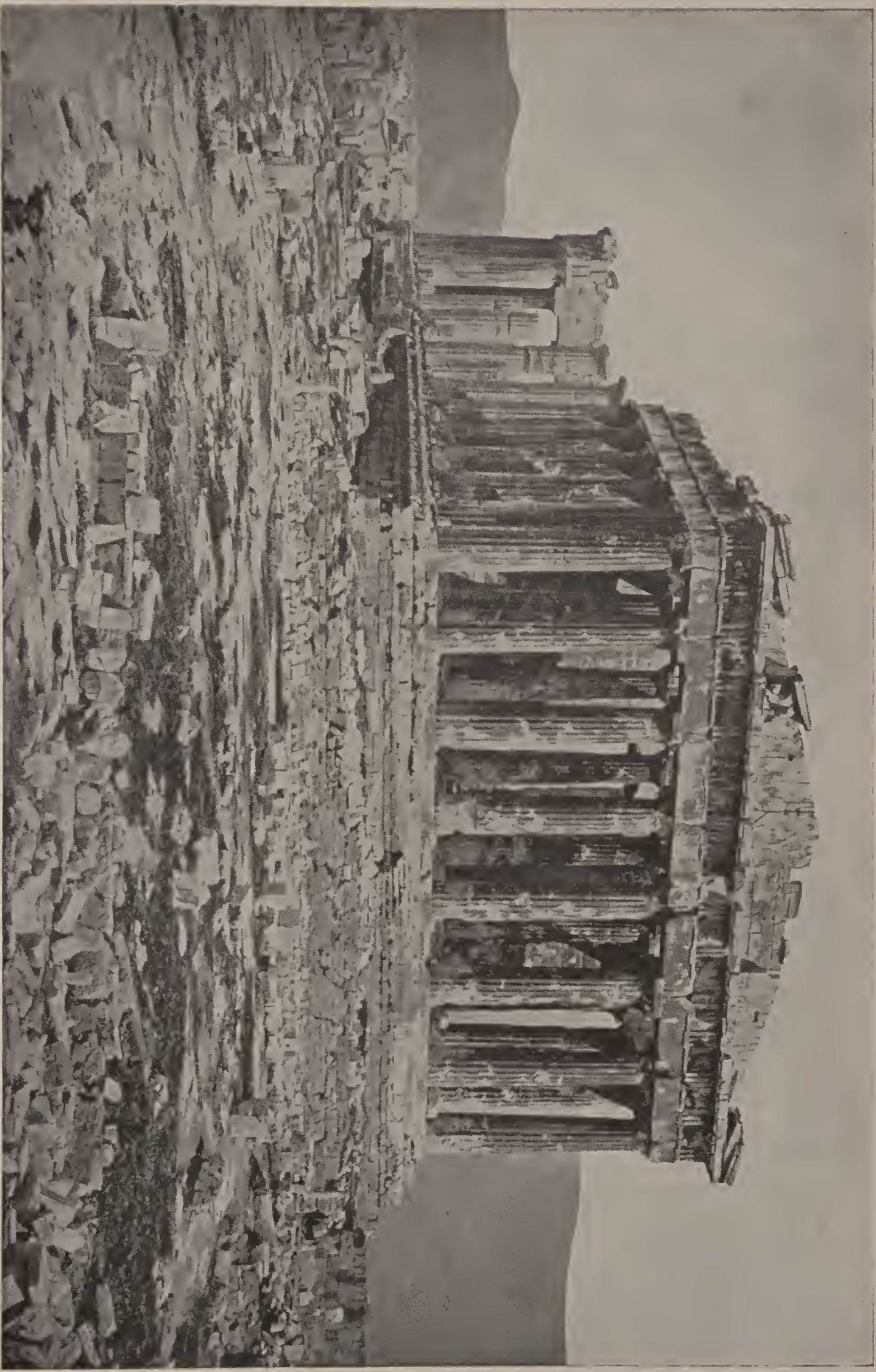
With the lapse of time, and the progress of events, the light grows clearer. As the race increases in age the revelation from

God becomes more direct in its references to the future state of man. Narratives like those of the appearance of Samuel when the king of Israel appealed to him for direction in the hour of distress, and the raising of the dead by Elijah and Elisha, can have no meaning apart from the belief that existence persists after physical death has occurred. Then, too, there are many passages in which the certainty of immortality seems to be taken for granted. It is not definitely stated as a fact, but it is assumed to be true. In the prophetic books the light shines still brighter, and the desire which the earlier people of the race had cherished probably came to be a strong hope, if not a settled belief, of the majority of the Jews long before the coming of Christ.

Certain writers who are opposed to religion assert that the idea of immortality did not, with any degree of clearness, come into the world until it was taught by Christ. A very *Early beliefs.* few religious writers, who appear to have been more highly gifted with zeal than they were with wisdom, have taken the same ground. But the evidence is strongly against them. It is not claimed that the men of early times held the idea of an existence after death as clearly and as firmly as do the men of the present day. It is admitted that the doctrine derives its main support from revelation, and that revelation itself was progressive. Many races were entirely without this source of light, and for those who received it the manifestation was, at the first, very slight.

Compared with the information which people of our own time have, the ancients knew but little regarding the natural world, yet they knew something, and their knowledge, though in many respects deficient, was real and useful. No one thinks of asserting that this was not the case. But such an assertion would be as reasonable as is the claim that the early peoples, whose ideas of the future life were vague, were ignorant of, or disbelievers in, the idea of a life after death. Doubtless many of them had "only twilight glimpses of immortality," and at times their faith may have been very weak, but the claim that they had some sort and degree of belief in a future state of existence cannot be successfully contested.

The fact that from prehistoric times man has cared for the bodies of the dead shows a hope, and a certain degree of ex-



THE PARTHENON (TEMPLE OF MINERVA), ATHENS, GREECE.

pectation, of a future life. We are so familiar with the custom of burying the dead, and the service is so interwoven with the forms of religious life, as well as with the proprieties of civilization, that people of the present day fail to realize how much this ceremony meant to savage and barbarous tribes and races. When performed by ignorant and degraded men the act of burial of the dead body had a profound significance. It must have been prompted by a feeling that something remained for man beyond this world. It shows, too, that in the lowest forms of manhood there are undeveloped powers and capacities for good, and fully justifies the inspiring sentiment of the famous French writer who exclaimed: "What a future I begin to discern for this strange animal, hardly knowing how to build for himself a hut better than a wild beast's lair, and yet concerning himself to provide an eternal home for his dead."¹

Prehistoric man.

The worship of ancestors, too, by many ignorant, and by some cultured peoples, indicates at least an expectation that the soul would survive the death of the body. The substitution of cremation of the dead body for burial, on the part of many of the Hindus, appears to have been due to an increase of faith in the doctrine of immortality. It came to be supposed that the burning of the body would facilitate the entrance of the soul to the place of its abode, as it would be wafted to the skies by the flame of the funeral pile. There are, also, passages in the Vedas which show that the soul was believed to live after it had departed from the body, and in one place it is asserted, without qualification, that "in dying we go to the gods."

*Worship of
ancestors.*

Buddha found a common belief in the idea of immortality, and, according to many of his interpreters, labored hard for its suppression. His efforts in this direction were not without great results, yet many millions of his followers believe, as millions have believed in every age since his day, that an existence of some kind will continue indefinitely, if not forever.

Denial by Buddha.

The early Egyptians dreaded the destruction of existence, and, though they desired a happy life in some world beyond the earth, they seem to have been far more anxious to secure a pro-

¹ Edgar Quinet, *La Création*.

longation of existence than they were to form pure and noble characters. To them a degraded form of life seemed preferable to an existence that would soon come to an end. It is probable, however, that there was a general hope that at some time an enduring state of peace and happiness would be attained. At some periods in their history the belief that it would be well with those who had followed the ways of truth was very strong. In treating of their religion an able writer has said: "In every sun which set to rise again, it saw the certain prophecy of the resurrection of its dead, and gazed upon the purple west with a look full of hope, profoundly believing that the crown of immortality would encircle the brow of the just."¹

The Egyptian belief.

Although the future life was regarded by the Greeks and Romans as shadowy and unreal, and many, in all, doubted whether any part of man survived the event of death, there was a pretty general belief that something continued to exist.

The Greek and Roman view.

It has been said, and doubtless with truth, that the Greeks and Romans gave far more thought to the present life than they did to what might come to them at its close. To them the life upon earth was the real, and the desirable, existence. But it must be remembered that they were without the light of the later revelation which enables us to see that death is only the way by which we pass to a better life. It is not strange that, with their limited knowledge, their faith was weak. Even Socrates sometimes seemed to fear that the hereafter might prove a blank, but toward the last he said: "Cheerfully do I depart this life, hoping for the immortal—the imperishable." Other philosophers sometimes doubted, and a few even denied, the probability of a continuance of existence after death.

All this does not justify adverse criticism. We see the same things in our own day. While the vast majority are firm believers, there are multitudes of people in Christian lands who appear to regard the present life as the most desirable one which they are likely to have. They certainly give a great deal more of attention to the things of earth than they do to those which pertain to another state of existence. There are many, too, whose faith is weak, and some who profess to believe that man utterly perishes at death. The fact seems to

Since Christ came.

¹ E. De Pressensé, *The Ancient World and Christianity*.

be that before the coming of Christ there was the same general hope of a future life that men cherish at the present day, together with what may properly be called a belief that this hope would be realized. But the hope was not as strong, and the belief was not as definite, as has been the case since He preached the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and in His own person demonstrated the fact that death is not the destruction of conscious and active life.

While there has been a very common belief in the immortality of the soul, the idea represented by this term has had widely varying degrees of significance. In fact, it has been one of the most elastic terms which men ^{*Various forms of immortality.*} have ever employed. To some classes of people it has stood for a certain idea, while to other classes it has brought either very much higher, or decidedly lower, conceptions. The word has often been used to represent a vague belief in some undefined sort of existence which was to be continued for an indefinite period after death. In many other cases it has stood for the idea of a conscious, unbroken, and an actually imperishable existence. Between these two extremes the doctrine has been held in many intermediate forms.

From early times down to the present day there have been many believers in the doctrine that man is immortal by virtue of his connection with the race. Each man is a link ^{*Immortality of the race.*} in the great chain of humanity. Each one is to live through those who come after him. The desire to leave children who should perpetuate the family name has been common to men of all ages who have risen above the savage or barbarous state, though it has diminished in intensity as the idea of personal immortality has come to be more generally accepted.

Among the Israelites this desire may have been strengthened by the hope, which was entertained by a great number of the people, that in their own family line the promised Messiah, who it was believed would elevate their race to a position of power and glory among the nations of the earth, would come. But no such idea was entertained by the members of other tribes and races, who were equally anxious that their particular families, and through them the larger organizations with which they were connected, should be perpetuated.

Something akin to this idea was carried into practice in the

case of the famous Immortal Ten Thousand of the Persian army. Herodotus says that "these Persians were called Immortal for the following reason: if any one of them made a deficiency in the number, compelled either by death or disease, another was ready chosen to supply his place; so that they were never either more or less than ten thousand." These men were immortal, not as individuals, but as an organization. Every breach made by death was at once repaired, and this splendid division of the Persian army was constantly maintained at its highest degree of efficiency. All of its original members might die, and yet the ranks would remain as complete as they had ever been.

By many of the peoples of earlier times the preservation of the family, the tribe, or the race was regarded as carrying with it something which pertained to the individual. The man did not think of himself as utterly perishing so long as his family should endure. Those who came after him would, he believed, inherit something from him which would become a part of themselves, and which would be transmitted from generation to generation of their descendants. The teachings of certain modern philosophical schools which profess to be able to solve some of the more perplexing mysteries of human existence seem to approach very closely to this early form of belief in the immortality of the race. The system which is known as the Religion of Science is a case in point. In this we are taught that "the souls of our ancestors continue to live in us," and when any individual dies "his soul is gathered to his fathers, and, together with their souls, it floats on in the great stream of immortality."¹

Another form in which the doctrine of the immortality of the soul has found many believers makes continued existence dependent upon achievement. If this view is correct, men are immortal, not by reason of anything which inheres in the constitution of either the soul or the body, but only by means of what they accomplish while they are in the world. The great poet will live in his works; the great philanthropist will be remembered for his beneficence and self-sacrifice, and will for ages be revered by humanity; and the patriot will be honored by the posterity of those for whom he lived and died.

*Immortality by
achievement.*

¹ Dr. Paul Carus, *The Religion of Science*.

The men who have striven nobly, but who have been so hampered by circumstances which were beyond their control that they have appeared to live and labor in vain, have no future reward. In other words, the blessings, whatever they may be, of this form of immortality are not bestowed for meritorious conduct, or earnest effort, but are given merely and only as the reward of success. The man who is "found faithful in a very little" will have no recognition after death. Greatness, not goodness, is the passport to immortality.

There is also the form of immortality which the Egyptian and some of the earlier Hindu philosophers taught, which depends for continued existence upon a union of the soul with Deity. This system of doctrine has also been *Union with Deity.* held by pantheists of all later times. It supposes that at death, or after it has passed through the prolonged courses of education and discipline which are necessary to fit it for such a consummation, the personality of the individual is merged in that of the Universal Soul. Existence will go on forever, but the identity of the man himself, which is the vital element of immortality, will be wholly eliminated.

Still another form in which existence after death is supposed to be possible is that which is properly described as personal immortality. This is not limited to the idea of a mere continuance of life after death. It not only *Personal immortality.* promises life, but it presents that life as real and abiding. The soul is not merged in other souls, or in the One Soul, but it forever remains itself. It is conscious of its own being and certain of its identity. The conditions of its existence are greatly changed by death; but this change of circumstances and surroundings has no power over the real life of the soul.

Some of the forms in which the doctrine of the immortality of the soul has been held are open to grave objections. The idea of a continued existence through the family or the race is only a substitute, and a very poor one at that, for any real and satisfying immortality. For a *Objections to some forms of the doctrine.* time the race will be continued, and the family may be perpetuated. But if this is all, the individual sinks into oblivion at death. And even if he could bring himself to believe that such an intangible form of continued existence as this was desirable, it would be very far from gratifying his wish for immortality.

For, so far as its own perpetuation is concerned, the race itself is not immortal. Science and Scripture both affirm, in the most emphatic manner, that the present form of the world will be destroyed. Individual souls may survive, but the development of the race as such will be terminated.

The form of immortality which is to be secured by achievement is fully as undesirable so far as what it offers is regarded, and is equally impotent so far as its practical outcome is concerned. It offers immortality as the reward of great achievement, but it does not continue the personal existence. Neither does it make any distinction between the good and the evil who become prominent in the affairs of the world. A monster of iniquity will be remembered long after the humble saint has been forgotten. Poor as it is, this form of immortality can never be secured by the masses. It is only for the few who are able to rise far above the level of our common humanity.

To the great majority of men the idea of losing the very self in the Universal Soul, which the pantheist recognizes as God, cannot be satisfactory. This, like all other theories which blot out the personality of the human soul, seems but little better than annihilation. The advocates of this theory assure us that the soul remains in existence, though in a different form. This may be true, but if the continued existence is unknown to itself it is hard to see how the soul is benefited. So far as its own consciousness is concerned, it might as well perish at death.

As has already been stated, the idea of a personal immortality did not become well developed until mankind had been upon the earth for a considerable period. Probably the great characters of Scripture history, and not a few individuals of lesser note, perceived it distinctly, but the masses of men in the earlier ages of the world must have been ignorant of the great truth which it embodied. This may have been due in part to a want of intellectual, as well as a lack of spiritual development. Such knowledge may have been, as an understanding of the providence of God was to the Psalmist, "too wonderful" for the ordinary people of that time to comprehend.

There is no other form of the doctrine of immortality which can even approximately meet the wants, and satisfy the desires of men. This form alone offers a real and conscious state of being beyond the grave. Accepting this view, man can face

death with composure. It is still an enemy, it is true, and an enemy to which he must yield for a little time, but The only satisfactory form. it is one over which he will eventually triumph. He can regard the state beyond death as a continuation, under more favorable conditions, of the present life. His light will neither be extinguished, nor be passed on to another. It will continue to be his own in all the boundless future which awaits him. Instead of going out of existence at death he can enter upon a purer and a far more exuberant life than that of earth.

The fact that the great majority of thinking men, in all countries, and all ages of the world, have had a more or less clearly defined hope that they would survive the Not a self-evident truth. event of death must not lead us to assume that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul proves itself. In the world around us there are many hints and suggestions that it is true. Numerous analogies point in the same direction. All of these evidences receive a considerable degree of confirmation from the natural tendencies of our mental and moral natures. But when we endeavor to obtain absolute proof, such evidence, for instance, as is required to establish a case in one of our higher courts of law, we do not find it as easily as many persons who have accepted the doctrine as a matter of course, and without making special investigation, suppose that it may be secured. We can truly say that the indications are so clear, the probabilities are so great, and the evidences are so many, that it would be unreasonable to doubt that life continues after the body dies. Still, this is not equivalent to actual demonstration, and it is the part of wisdom to admit the real condition of the case. Nothing is to be gained by refusing to see the difficulties in which it is involved. It may require study to find it, but we ought to know the truth and understand the nature of its foundation.

The fact that the doctrine of immortality is difficult, if not impossible, to prove, does not militate against its truth. There is a sufficient cause for the difficulty, and that cause Why demonstration is difficult. must be apparent to any one who will think seriously upon the subject of future existence. The limitations of our earthly life and condition do not allow us to obtain a great deal of direct information regarding the place or state of the dead. As long as we live here we are practically excluded from what lies beyond the veil.

Before we have proof we must have knowledge. The kind of knowledge that is needed to prove absolutely the fact of a future life must come through the senses. But the senses have to do with things that are tangible, that are now present to them, or that have been previously observed. From what they assure us regarding the present and the past we may infer certain things in regard to the future. But this is very different from knowing just what will occur. Because the sun has appeared to rise and set day after day, for century after century, and age after age, it is reasonable to suppose that the same phenomena will occur to-morrow. Probably no one who reads these lines has the slightest doubt that this will be the case. But no one can be absolutely sure that his expectation will be fulfilled. There will come a day upon which such a supposition would be an error. Upon the to-morrow of that day the sun will neither rise nor set. When the wreck of our planetary system occurs — and its wreck is inevitable — the phenomena of nature which are now so orderly, and apparently so stable, will come to an end. This event may not occur for ages. Its date is a matter of conjecture and not of knowledge. The one thing concerning it of which we can be absolutely sure is that it will come at its appointed time.

Now if we cannot obtain absolute proof concerning future events in the natural world, of which our five senses give us so much and such varied information, we should not be either surprised or discouraged because we are unable, by their use, to obtain definite knowledge regarding what may be the lot of man after death. When he dies, man enters a realm that is beyond the limits of the earthly vision. If we appeal to our natural senses to determine his state and condition we are using instruments which are not at all adapted to serve the purpose of our investigation. The microscope is a wonderful instrument, and, when used for the purpose for which it was designed, it gives marvelous results, but it is worse than useless when we want to view the stars. If we are to study the heavenly bodies to any advantage we must use a telescope. On the same principle, if we are to learn of spiritual things we must, to a great extent, use our spiritual faculties. For such a purpose the senses, which serve us so well in our study of the physical universe, are wholly inadequate. They are not the right kind of instruments.

On account of the difficulty of obtaining proof regarding the future life of man, various objections to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul have been made. To a few minds these objections carry conviction. To many others they are simply disquieting. Upon the great majority they make but a slight impression. The replies to some of these objections have been anticipated in preceding pages of this work. Perhaps, in connection with certain other arguments which are supposed to throw doubt upon, if they do not disprove, a future existence, they should here receive a little further notice.

Objections to the doctrine of personal immortality.

The intimate connection of the body and the soul during the present life is thought by some to make a future life impossible. The physical and spiritual natures are inseparably joined in life. At death they must either be parted or both must perish. The body dies and the soul cannot live in the dead body. It is claimed, by some, that the body is just as necessary for the existence of the soul, as it is itself dependent upon the soul for its own life. But this claim is founded only upon belief. It is supposition, not knowledge. The one who makes it can no more prove that the soul perishes when the body dies than the believer in the doctrine of immortality can prove that the soul survives. One supposition is placed over against another, but the vastly superior powers of the soul, which have been dwelt upon in another chapter, make the probabilities very great that it can, and will, continue to exist after the body has fallen into ruin.

Intimate union of physical and spiritual natures.

The objection is often made that there can be "no life without organization." This may, or may not, be correct. So far as the objector is concerned it is assumption, pure and simple. He has never seen indications of life apart from some form of organization, but this does not prove that such life cannot exist. There are a great many things, in this world as well as beyond it, of which he is ignorant. It is neither necessary nor wise for other men to limit their faith by his knowledge. But even if the objection proves to be well founded it is not insuperable. It is not certain that the inhabitants of the spiritual world are in an entirely disembodied state, or that they entered their new abode in such a condition. There are many people, and among them some eminent scientists, who

Life dependent upon organization.

hold that man has a body within his physical frame. The composition of this body is not known. It is so ethereal that it cannot be detected by the tests which are employed in determining the qualities of ordinary matter. Possibly it is formed of something regarding which we have no definite knowledge, and that in its nature it closely resembles the soul which it clothes. This is an interesting conjecture, which will receive further attention in another section of this work.

The objection, which has been noted, against the immortality of the race in this world is easily sustained. Man cannot have unending existence here because the earth itself is to be destroyed. There is, under the present order, a great and unceasing dissipation of energy. The time will come when, instead of the magnificent coursing of innumerable worlds through almost illimitable space, whatever has escaped destruction will be at perfect rest. Around this "single lone star" impenetrable darkness will gather, and upon its surface life cannot be maintained.

This, however, does not prove that man must perish. It does not follow that he cannot live anywhere simply because he cannot live here. There may be worlds, and systems of worlds, of which we are wholly ignorant, yet which far surpass those of the physical universe. And these worlds, which to us are as yet unseen and unknown, may prove to be the real and the permanent creation, the homes in which the children of God will forever abide.

To some persons it seems almost impossible that they can live elsewhere. The idea that they must go into another world, of the location of which they are ignorant, and concerning which they have no information except what they receive by faith, appalls them. This is not wholly unnatural. A great mystery hangs around the future life. It is something which we do not understand, and which, of course, we cannot comprehend, yet the mystery is no greater than was that which veiled our entrance into this world. When we were born this world was just as new to us as another world can be when we die. We shall be no greater strangers there than we were here. And it is only reasonable to believe that the Father who provided for our appearance here will make ample preparations for our reception elsewhere.

There is also the objection, which has been made by certain

philosophical schools, that "whatever had a beginning must have an end." If viewed from a materialistic standpoint this may seem to be true. But to the man who believes in the Bible this objection should not prove disquieting. He will reason that the God who created him, and who has continued him in being unto the present time, can prolong his existence forever. As he lives, and moves, and has his being in God now, he has reason to suppose that the sustaining power of his Creator will be continued after death.

A philosophical objection.

It cannot be denied that some of the many objections which, in one form or another, have been brought against the doctrine of personal immortality present real difficulties. In this it does not differ from most other religious doctrines, or from the numerous theories which scientists have advanced to sustain the positions which they have taken in regard to matters in their own special lines. Every system, whether of religion or science or philosophy, has its advocates and its opponents. Very few doctrines which are of any real importance are so completely self-evident as to be accepted by large numbers of intelligent men without investigation. As a rule, such doctrines are subjected to sharp and long-continued criticism.

The doctrine not disproved.

While some of the objections to the doctrine that life persists beyond the grave are not easily answered, there are many others in which the trouble which they suggest is far more apparent than it is real. But when all these arguments are combined the doctrine against which they are brought is not disproved. The strongest argument is merely negative. When all the antagonistic forces are united they only leave the case in doubt. Probably in the great majority of cases in which the doctrine of personal immortality is not accepted the want of assent is due to agnosticism rather than to positive unbelief. The case is really held in suspense. More light is desired. The final decision has not been rendered. The arguments which have been presented as proofs are not wholly convincing. They do not quite eliminate the element of doubt.

While we cannot prove it in the manner that we can prove that lead is heavy, or iron is hard, or phosphorus is inflammable, there are many reasons which lead us to believe that the soul is immortal. Some of these are much stronger than others, but even the weakest have a

Reasons for belief.

certain degree of value, not only in themselves, but also in sustaining and enforcing those which are more pronounced. When all are united they present a mass of evidence which makes very probable the truth of the doctrine which they are employed to support.

It does not appear to be either necessary or desirable to refer to all of these arguments in detail. Some of them have already been noted in other connections, though a few of these may need a brief reference in the present chapter. Various other arguments are of too great importance to be omitted. But a really exhaustive treatment of the subject would far exceed the limits of the present work, as well as prove a great deal more elaborate than its readers would desire.

Along some lines, as those of physiology and psychology, there are apparent antagonisms. One set of facts can be collected which present strong indications that the whole man perishes at death. Another and, as it seems to the writer, a far more convincing array of truths can be obtained which go to prove that the destruction of the tenement which it had inhabited does not injure the soul. Like the Roman god, Janus, these sciences, in this particular respect, seem to face both ways. Both believers and unbelievers in the doctrine of immortality obtain arguments from them. But there are other lines along which we seek information in respect to the future of man which are not so easily made to do service for both parties in the contest. In the natural world, for instance, there are indications of what ought to be, and indeed must be, the result of death if the purpose which appears to have been present in the mind of the Creator is to be carried out. In the moral world the necessity of a future life in order that the right may prevail, and that man may see that God is good and just, is still more apparent.

In earlier times the advocates of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul made a considerable use of the analogies of nature in support of their views. They argued that the alternations of day and night pointed to a new life for man beyond the grave. As the sun, after appearing in the east, slowly approaches the zenith and then gradually declines until its light is no longer seen, yet appears in undimmed splendor on the morning of the following day, so man, it is said, may proceed from infancy to middle life, and go gradually and almost

*Analogies of
nature.*

imperceptibly down the decline of increasing age until he disappears in death, only to reappear after a comparatively brief interval in all the vigor of his previous existence.

The renewal of vegetation in the spring, after the devastation which winter had wrought, was supposed to point in the same direction. The leafless trees, the withered flowers, and the grass that was apparently dead, were regarded as symbols of the departure of man from the earth. In the spring, when the trees put forth their leaves, the flowers came into bloom, the grass covered the earth with a carpet of green, and all nature was clothed with the glory and affluence of life in its most beautiful forms, all visible things seemed fitted to lead the thought of man to the hope that after the winter of death there would be for him, as well as for the tree and the plant, a renewed and an abundant life.

The change in the seed, which when buried in the ground undergoes a process of decay and yet springs into a far more exuberant life than it had previously enjoyed, was also largely employed to illustrate the doctrine that life is not destroyed by death. It was supposed that, like the seed, the body of man would perish; but as from the decaying seed a new plant was produced, so it was thought that from the buried dust of man a new body, which was endowed with a fuller and a more vigorous life than had previously been enjoyed, would eventually come.

Then, too, the transformations of various insects were supposed to give a considerable degree of probability to the doctrine of the immortality of man. The insect appears to die. Its form remains, but it seems as inert as a clod. Yet within this seemingly inanimate form a great change takes place. Another and a widely different body is developed. At length, from the chrysalis, which appears to be utterly dead, a winged insect comes forth. The color is much more beautiful, and the form is far more perfect, than any in which the creature had previously appeared. So it was thought that man might seem to be dead, and that his body might rest for a time in the grave, but that eventually he would come forth with renewed life and in a far nobler form than that in which his soul had dwelt during the period of the earthly life.

To a certain extent these analogies are helpful. They indicate possibilities, and they suggest probabilities, but they fall far

short of proof. None of them are perfect. Some of them are weak. The one first noted is especially feeble. The disappearance of the sun at night and its reappearance in undimmed glory in the morning is altogether different from what the night of death brings to man. So far as we know, or have any reason to believe, the sun is precisely the same at night that it is by day. We cannot see it at night as we can during the day merely and only because the relative position of the observed and the observer has changed. At one period the sun is within, and at the other period it is beyond, the range of our vision. By traveling around the world a man may disappear from our sight just as the sun does, and in due time we may see him again in the full vigor of his powers. During this journey he remains practically the same man that he was when he went away. We recognize him as the identical individual when he returns.

*These analogies
defective.*

In these respects there is a marked similarity. Both the sun and the man pass, for a time, beyond the range of our observation, and both seem to have remained uninjured. But when a man is taken from our sight by the agency of death the case is so widely different from that of the setting and rising sun as hardly to admit of comparison. Death does a great deal more to a man than to merely change the relation in which he stands to the world around him. To the body, which is the visible man, it brings total ruin. Before he can again appear in the human form a marvelous change must be wrought. His ability to go away from us, and return to us, during life does not prove that he will continue to exist after he has been called away from the earth itself by death.

The apparent cessation of vegetable life in the winter, which is followed by its renewal in the spring, is something very different from what befalls man at death. As long as this phenomenon is observed the trees and plants which are employed as object lessons to teach that life persists after death do not die. While this alternation continues their organisms remain intact. Life has not departed, it is merely quiescent. The trees and plants sleep during the cold season. They have, like men, alternate periods of activity and repose. And what has been so often compared to death and reanimation is only their sleeping and waking. But this alternation will not continue indefinitely.

The time will come when the tree and the plant will die as truly as the body of man dies. Then their organisms will perish, as the human body perishes, utterly and, so far as our senses can determine, forever. When once the vital element has departed the forms of the tree and the plant are as lifeless as is the form of a man who has died.

The analogy of the seed which appears to have a life after death is also at fault. The seed does not wholly perish and then spring into a new life. If once the germ dies, either before or after the seed falls into the ground, there will never be the slightest manifestation of life. It is claimed, of course, that man does not utterly perish at death. Something leaves the body, and that something continues to exist. But all that is visible of the human form is destroyed. In the case of the seed the destructive process is not as complete. Something tangible continues to live.

There is another point at which this analogy fails. The seed may grow, and be productive, but its identity is destroyed. The grain that is harvested is not the grain that is sown. The oak is not the acorn from which it came. Every trace of individuality has disappeared. Upon seeing an acorn and an oak-tree for the first time, one who had not read about them would not suspect that two such dissimilar objects sustained any close relationship to each other. The change from the seed to the plant, or the tree which grows from it, is far too great to allow it to be properly used as an illustration of the effect of death upon the human being. The destruction of personality, which occurs in the case of the seed, would, if it took place in the higher realm, make any desirable immortality of the human soul impossible.

The analogy of the insect which appears to perish in one form and then come forth in another, and a far more highly developed state, is also defective. It is true that the butterfly is greatly superior, in beauty and in capacity, to the chrysalis from which it was developed. For a time it seems as though a triumph over death had been secured. The homely, crawling worm passes through a change which outwardly resembles that which death brings to man. Yet, as the result of that apparent death, the insect becomes a beautiful creature which can soar in the air with ease and grace and which is full of joyous life. But ere long another change comes. This time the change is

destructive. What occurs at this stage is not transformation, but death.

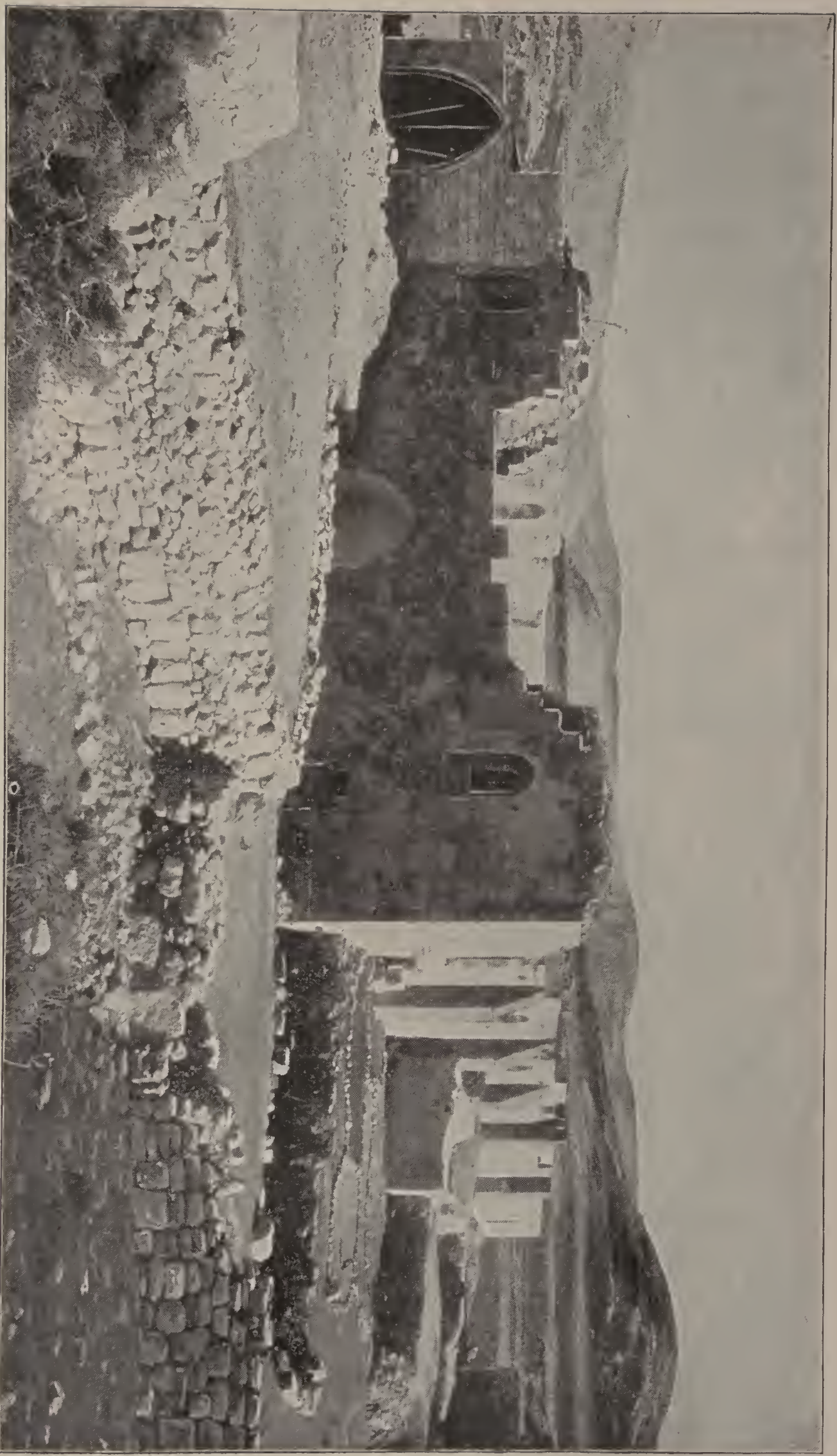
During the period of life the analogy is striking. The failure is at the final point. The worm, or caterpillar, changes to a chrysalis, and from the chrysalis the butterfly appears and enters upon a far more extended sphere of life than it had been previously given. So the human being changes from youth to middle life, and from this point proceeds to old age. These transitions, though gradual, are marked by great changes. At each advance much that belonged to the previous life is left behind. To a considerable extent we die to the earlier stage of being and enter a new life with each succeeding term. But this does not prove that the process can be continued indefinitely. In the case of the insect the highest state of its visible life is very brief, and there is nothing to indicate that it will ever be renewed. Man, also, comes to the last visible stage of his existence, and, after the lapse of a period which varies with the circumstances of each individual case, goes down into the darkness of the grave. Judging from the analogy alone, we should be obliged to conclude that the insect and the man had met a common fate.

The fact that the arguments in favor of the immortality of the human soul which are drawn from the analogies of nature are not convincing should not shake even the feeblest faith in this great doctrine. From the very nature of the case analogies cannot be equivalent to proof. They are valuable as indications of what is probable, and also as corroborations of other evidences which point in the same direction. They count for something in themselves, and they increase the total amount of the testimony in behalf of the doctrine which they indirectly sustain. Farther than this they cannot go.

The fact that men of all races, and all times, have had a hope, and to a very great extent an expectation, that the soul would survive the body, is to be ranged with the stronger evidences than those which analogies furnish that the death of a human being does not destroy his existence. In the spiritual world, just as truly as in the natural world, everything has an adequate cause. The almost "universal consent" of mankind which has been given to this idea must have sprung

*Should not be
expected to
furnish proof.*

Universal desire.



CHURCH OF ST. JOHN, AT SAMARIA. BUILT BY THE CRUSADERS.

from something that is deeply implanted in the very nature of the human soul. It cannot have come by means of communication, for it is held by peoples who for ages have been ignorant even of the existence of each other. Neither can it have been due to a similarity of mental processes, for it is common to people whose methods of thought, and whose intellectual capacities, differ as greatly as do their natural surroundings. It cannot have been due to accident or to chance. It is inconceivable that such a doctrine should have been so widely disseminated and so generally received if there had been no solid foundation upon which it could rest. Surely, this hope and longing for a future life must be built upon something far more substantial than an "iridescent dream."

To this conclusion it has been objected that the fact that a specific thing is desired does not make it certain that the particular object that is wanted will be secured. Life brings numberless disappointments. To many it seems to be very largely made up of failures to accomplish the purposes to the fulfillment of which thought, and care, and toil are lavishly given. We desire, and labor, and perhaps pray, with earnestness and persistence, for certain things which seem to be of great importance to ourselves, and yet the blessings which we so much desire are not secured. The great majority of intelligent people are constantly longing for something which they never can obtain. Even those who have fortunes which enable them to secure everything that money can purchase are obliged to leave many a wish ungratified. From this common disappointment regarding the things of the present life some have argued that it is highly probable that there is an equal degree of uncertainty concerning a future state of existence.

If there were no God this line of reasoning would be legitimate. In that case there could be no better ground for supposing that the desire for a future life will be granted than there is for expecting that whatever is wanted in this world can be obtained. But if we admit that there is a God who is interested in us, and who watches over us, this objection counts for naught. We shall then see that the object of life is not to secure happiness for ourselves in this world. We are here to glorify our Maker, to do good to our fellow

An objection to this ground of belief.

The objection not sustained.

men, and to form characters which will enable us to be happy in the great future which awaits us after we die. Consequently, the fact that we often fail to obtain the things that we now desire, many of which might prove injurious if our wishes were granted, is not to be regarded as evidence that we shall be baffled concerning what is for our highest and our eternal welfare. It is fair to suppose that God withholds the minor things of the earthly life in order to turn our thoughts to the great realities which lie beyond, and to qualify us by this loving, though apparently severe, discipline to receive and enjoy the marvelous blessings which He has in store for us.

Another weak point to this objection is found in the fact that the things which men long for in this present world vary greatly with different peoples, and with the different individuals of the same race. A condition that would be entirely satisfactory to an Eskimo would seem intolerable to an average Englishman. And what one educated man would prefer might be extremely distasteful to another man who is equally well educated and whose circumstances closely resemble those of his fellow. Some men desire to amass vast fortunes, others seek high positions, and many would be glad to live in luxurious ease. One man would be a great poet, another would become an eminent architect. All men have their longings, but the desires of all men are not for the same objects. In fact, the specific things which men desire, and regarding the attainment of which they are so often disappointed, are almost innumerable. They are nearly as diverse in character as they are great in number.

Aside from the hope of a future life there is no centring of desire upon any single object. One man wants one thing while another man seeks something widely different. But concerning the desire for a future existence the vast majority of men are agreed. The race as a whole desires immortality. This fact is strong presumptive evidence that the wish will be gratified. Because men are denied some of the great number of things which they want here, it does not follow that the united appeal of the race will be disregarded.

The fact of this almost universal desire for a continued life is in itself very strong evidence that there is to be such an existence. So far as this world is concerned, our longings are for things that are real. Our circumstances may be such that we

cannot obtain them, but there is no doubt in our minds as to their existence. If there were no such things we should not, indeed we could not, desire them. "Nothing ever gravitates toward nothing." Wherever there is attraction there must be something to attract. Wherever there is a longing there must be something to be longed for. The only reasonable explanation of this widely spread and persistent hope of and belief in a future life is that there will be an existence beyond the grave. "Whatever endures from age to age, whatever will not die, whatever resists expulsion from the feelings of the race and maintains its sway over the human heart, gives overwhelming evidence that it is true."¹

It is quite common to think and to speak of a continued existence beyond the grave as something which is in direct conflict with natural law. Many earnest believers in the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul *Immortality and natural law.* hold this belief. They are convinced that if there is no interposition of a higher power the death of the body will involve the destruction of the individual. This they believe would be in strict accordance with the principles of the laws of the universe. But they also hold that the existence of law proves that there must be a lawgiver, and it is certain that the maker of the law must be superior to the law itself. Therefore they admit that the natural course of events may be changed, and what appeared under the rule of law to be impossible may be readily accomplished. The principle is sound, and the lesson which, in this case, is drawn from it is true, but it is probable that the men who make it a very prominent article of their belief have overestimated the difficulties which natural law presents. They are relying almost wholly upon faith when they might, to a considerable degree, walk by sight.

The persistence of life beyond death is not as contrary to the natural order of things as a superficial study of the subject would lead us to suppose. It is true that everything that lives upon the earth seems to die and pass away. But if we look a little deeper into the matter we shall find that one of the great laws of the universe is the law of life. Death and decay in the natural world are followed by living forms. A vast amount of vegetation perishes in the autumn, but in the following spring

¹ George A. Gordon, D. D., *The Witness to Immortality*.

the earth is again covered with plants. The monarch of the forest dies, and passes through the various stages of vegetable decay until not the slightest trace of its form remains, but, if the ordinary processes of nature are not interfered with, another tree will take the place which had been occupied by the one that has disappeared. Animals, also, perish, but the places which they vacate are soon occupied by other creatures. Under the disintegrating influences of moisture and sunshine even the rocks waste away, but the elements of plant food which they contain are taken up by vegetation, and the decay of the apparently inert stone brings into an available condition material which promotes the growth and increases the vigor of the living things which feed upon it.

Professor Huxley taught that putrefaction, which is commonly regarded as the last stage of decay, "is a concomitant, not of death, but of life." The microscope shows that the slight spots which appear at the beginning of this process are minute, but living plants. So it is all through the natural world. Inanimate objects, as well as all living beings, are subject to decay, but in all the vast changes which have occurred under the dominion of this inexorable and universal law no atom has ever perished, and as long as the material universe continues to exist not a single particle of matter will be destroyed.

This endless procession of death and life has its lesson for all observers. It glorifies life. While death seems to triumph, the processes of restoration are incessantly going on. What death casts down is constantly being rebuilt. It is not according to the law of nature that death should prevail. Its victories are many, but they are transient. Only by incessant activity does it succeed in maintaining the proper balance in the natural world. If it were allowed to proceed unchecked the exuberance of life would soon cause such an excessive production of plants and animals as to bring about the utter ruin of all living things upon the earth.

Yet it must be confessed that the continuance of life under the conditions which have been noted does not prove that the soul of man is immortal. For in all of these cases we have a substitution, rather than a persistence, of life. Death is followed by life, it is true, but that which follows is not the same life as that which ceased at death. The forest remains a forest, though

tree after tree decays. There may be as many trees there to-day as there were two centuries ago, but they are not the same trees. As many animals may find their homes in the regions in which man has not interfered with the natural conditions as were ever there at a single time, but they are not the identical animals that lived there in early days.

So, also, is it with mankind. The procession constantly marches on. The vast throng increases rather than diminishes. The city was never more populous than it is to-day. The country was never more densely inhabited. But while the numbers have been kept good the individuals have changed. Instead of the fathers we see the children, and they, too, are rapidly dropping out of the ranks and making room for their successors. While the sum total of life does not decrease, and the tide seems to promise a continuous flow for an indefinite period, the individual life does not permanently remain. There is no positive evidence of immortality here.

Thus far the evidence which is to be gathered from the operation of natural law is not convincing. But we are not obliged to stop here. We can look beyond the point to which we have now arrived. The individual dies, it is true. As far as the senses can determine it is only the race that goes on. As the result of death the man passes beyond the limited field of our observation. Still, we can see that the decay of the body does not involve the destruction of the elements of which the organism was composed. Science has proved that matter cannot become non-existent. Once created it must remain forever unless the fiat of its Creator shall consign it to nothingness. In and of itself it is indestructible.

The laws which apply to matter also govern in the realm of force. No movement can be effected without an expenditure of energy, but the force that is used is not destroyed. Its direction is changed, but it is neither lost nor diminished. No finite power can accomplish its destruction. Now there is something in man which directs and controls all of the movements of his body. This is a spiritual force, and there is no more reason to suppose that it ever can cease to be than there is to think that the changes of material substances result in their annihilation. Of the departed soul we can easily believe that

“Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems.”

Many facts have been stated to prove that the soul is greatly superior to the body. The natural inference from these facts is that though the lower nature must perish, the higher nature will survive. We have seen that the mind has a certain degree of independence of the body. In dreams the bodily powers are at perfect rest, while the mental faculties are often abnormally active. The dreamer lives in a house which to him is as real as any material structure could possibly be. He walks in fields which appear to be like those which he has often seen in his waking hours. He seems to hear music as sweet as any that ever delighted his ear. In some cases these dreams are new presentations of things which are already known. In others they picture scenes which are not at all familiar. Through an endless maze of combinations the mental processes go on. Yet all of the time the physical senses are locked in sleep. The life that is lived at such times is a life of the soul. Cases of suspended animation, to which reference has also been made, show still more completely the superiority of the soul to the body.

Another point that should be mentioned in this connection is the fact that while dreams are only occasional manifestations of the independent life of the soul, man has powers which never sleep. Often, unconsciously to himself, they warn him of danger in his waking hours. In the sleep of the body they seem to be constantly alert. If anything unusual occurs, they give the alarm. Thus, a man will sleep soundly amid the noise of cars and wagons in city streets, to which he is accustomed, and yet be awakened by an unusual disturbance in his room, even though it may be very slight. He may sleep undisturbed while an eloquent sermon is being delivered, but awake as soon as the preacher ceases to speak. A noise, like the ticking of a clock, in a room in which one works or sleeps, will not be noticed after the person becomes accustomed to it. Day after day, and night after night, it can go on, apparently without making the slightest impression upon the mind, but if it ceases, the change will be quickly noticed. This shows that there is a power in man which is of a high order, and which, so far as we can learn, does not depend upon any of the bodily senses.

The phenomena which have been mentioned, with others of a

similar nature, led a careful student of this subject to inquire whether this power is any more dependent upon the senses for its conscious activity than the life of the eagle is dependent upon the cage in which it is confined.¹ To this question there appears to be only one rational reply. The power which persists in sleep, which remains unimpaired for days, or even weeks, in cases of suspended animation, and which stands guard in all waking hours, is not likely to be extinguished when it is removed from the body through which, during the life of the latter, its capacities have been manifested.

We must either conclude that the soul lives after its separation from its earthly tabernacle, or else admit that the many claims which we have made for its superiority cannot be sustained. In youth and middle life the body *If the soul perishes.* is strong and vigorous, yet it appears to be under the dominion of the soul. But as death approaches the body loses its power. It becomes weaker even than it was in the helpless days of infancy. If at this critical time the soul fares just as the body fares, we have a signal proof that our former estimate of the relative importance and powers of the two natures was incorrect. The soul is just as weak as the body when the latter has reached its feeblest stage of existence. Such a supposition is not to be entertained.

A large number of believers in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul base their faith, to a considerable degree, upon alleged spiritual manifestations of which they have read or *Spiritual manifestations.* heard, or concerning which they have personal knowledge. If these phenomena have been correctly observed, and properly interpreted, the fact that existence continues after death is clearly established. This would not prove that the human soul is absolutely immortal, for it would not give assurance that the last crisis of its existence had been passed. There would be a possibility that something more destructive than the death of the body was yet in reserve. Still, if convincing proof can be found that souls have survived the event of death, and have for months, or years, or perhaps even for ages, maintained a conscious existence apart from their bodies, it will give the doctrine of immortality a very strong claim to belief.

A vast mass of evidence has been accumulated. Much of it is

¹ L. T. Townsend, D. D., *Credo*.

worse than worthless, for it is unquestionably fraudulent. Much, too, has been presented by people who were ignorant of psychic powers and phenomena, and who, in consequence of this ignorance, were wholly unfitted to estimate its value. There have also been a great many reports which were founded upon an utter misapprehension of the real facts in the cases which were under observation. But when all these deductions have been made, there still remains no small amount of testimony which demands the attention of those who are honestly seeking the truth regarding the condition of the soul after death.

From very early times to the present day there have been those who believed in the continued life of the spirits of the dead, because they have, as they supposed, either seen the departed or received communications from them. There have also been persons who professed to act as "mediums" between the spirits of the dead and people upon the earth. The practice of this art was forbidden by the Mosaic law, and at some periods in the history of the Israelites a statute which required that those having familiar spirits should be put to death was enforced with a good deal of vigor, though it did not entirely suppress the evil against which it was directed. In modern times mediums have become very numerous. The methods which they follow are different from those of the necromancers of the olden times, but, like their predecessors, they claim the power of communicating with the spirits of the dead.

In both ancient and modern times there has been much of fraud and misconception regarding the so-called manifestations from the spirit world. These phases of the subject will be more fully treated in a succeeding section, in which the possibility of communication between the living and the departed will be considered. For the purposes of this chapter, only a few of the more prominent points need be noted.

Those who hold to the literal interpretation of all statements of Scripture, and some who do not go to this length in their estimate of the meaning of certain passages, find in the Biblical account of the appearance of the prophet Samuel to Saul on the eve of the battle which cost the king his crown and his life, unquestionable proof that physical death is not equivalent to an extinction of being.

Various kinds of evidence.

Communication with the dead.

The appearance of Samuel.

In the great distress caused by his fear of the Philistines, and his desertion by the God to whom he had proved unfaithful, Saul disguised himself, and with two companions sought a woman who was reputed to have a familiar spirit. Arrived at her home, the king asked her to bring to him the person whom he should name. After he had overcome her fears that the penalty of death, which Saul himself had decreed against all who were found to have familiar spirits, would be inflicted, and promised with an oath that no punishment should come to her if she obeyed his request, the woman consented to do as he desired. The king then directed her to bring up Samuel, and according to the narrative the prophet appeared at her call.

It is not said that Saul himself saw Samuel, and a number of writers have endeavored to explain the whole story on the ground of deception. They claim that the woman pretended to bring up the soul of the deceased prophet, and that in his highly excited condition the king was easily persuaded that it was a genuine appearance. His bodily weakness and mental distress made it easy to impose upon him, and Saul readily accepted as truth something which had no foundation in fact.

This explanation is not satisfactory. There are strong evidences that a real presence from another world came into the home of the woman who professed to have communication with the souls of the dead. Doubtless this woman had been in the habit of practicing fraud. Probably in this case she expected to be obliged to resort to deception in order to convince the king that her claims were true. But the result of her efforts to maintain her reputation filled her with alarm. Evidently there was an appearance which she did not expect, and which she greatly feared. Her description of the figure satisfied Saul that it was really the prophet with whom he desired to converse. Samuel inquires why he has been disquieted and brought back to earth. Saul tells of his sore distress and asks what he shall do. The prophet reminds him of his great sin in failing to obey one of the direct commands of God, foretells the defeat of Israel on the coming day, and the death, at that time, of Saul and his sons.¹

The narrative appears to be the record of an actual occurrence. The fact that only the woman claimed to see the prophet, and that the king recognized him merely by her description,

¹ I Samuel xxviii. 8-19.

does not seem to warrant the conclusion that the spirit of Samuel did not really appear. Possibly the woman might, from what she had heard of the condition of the army, and from the demeanor of its commander, have predicted defeat without reference to supernatural causes, but it is hardly probable that she would do this. It is easier and more natural for one in her position to speak words of cheer to one who is in deep trouble than it is to be harsh and unfeeling. Her subsequent kindness in urging the weary and heart-broken monarch to partake of food is not at all in accordance with the idea that she desired to add to his fear and anxiety. Still less is it probable that she would have reproved the king for his sin, and have assured him that on the following day he and his sons would be with the prophet in another world. There is a far greater degree of difficulty in finding any other reasonable explanation of her course than there is in accepting the narrative as a plain statement of the actual return of the soul of the prophet to this world.

If the incident related was literally true, it is certain that in the case of Samuel existence continued after death. And it is equally clear that it was as living, conscious beings that Saul and his sons were to join the prophet in the unseen world. It is safe to infer that the soul has a power, derived from God of course, but none the less inherent in its constitution, which enables it to live apart from the material body which it uses while it is in this world.

While it appears to be certain that the soul of the prophet, who had died and whose body had been buried, came back to earth as a special messenger of God in response to the plea of one to whom in his lifetime he had been a counselor and a friend, it does not follow that the woman whose aid was invoked as a medium had the slightest degree of control of the departed spirit. Saul certainly hoped, and he seems to have expected, that the prophet would really respond to his appeal, but the woman was both surprised and frightened at the result of her incantations. If she had really possessed the power which she claimed, she would have been as expectant as was the king, and even more confident that the spirit of the one whom she called would answer the summons. Whatever evidence they may furnish, there is nothing in this incident to

*The medium
powerless.*

encourage the belief that mediums of the present day can call to earth the spirits of the dead.

In the New Testament we find the record of an appearance upon earth of two persons, one of whom had been dead nearly fifteen hundred years, and the other not less than nine hundred years. Christ had ascended a high mountain, taking with Him as companions Peter and James and John. Here the Master was transfigured. "His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him."

If the New Testament is true, there can be no possible doubt that Moses and Elijah really appeared upon the Mount of Transfiguration. The three disciples whom Christ had taken with Him not only saw these illustrious saints *The appearance of Moses and Elijah.* but they also knew who they were. Peter proposed to build a tabernacle for each of the distinguished visitors. Had the disciples who witnessed the interview been mistaken, either as to the reality of the appearance or the personality of the men who talked with their Master, He certainly would have corrected their error. But no such correction was offered, and the direct statement that these disciples had seen Moses and Elijah in company and conversation with Christ was made in three inspired narratives of the life of our Saviour. No stronger evidence of the genuineness of the appearance or the truth of the record could be desired.

The numerous appearances of Christ Himself after His resurrection are also to be regarded as proof that life does not end when the soul departs from the body. An objection *The appearances of Christ.* to this evidence is sometimes made on the ground that Christ was more than human, and that what proved true in His case may not occur in the cases of inferior beings. Those who believe the words of Christ concerning the life which He promised to give to all who accept Him as their Saviour will not be disturbed by this objection. It is merely noted because at this stage of the inquiry we have to do with matters of fact rather than with those in which faith is the leading element.

In the closing chapter of the Revelation the Apostle John tells of his interview with an angel whom he was about to worship, but who assured him that, instead of a divine being, as the apostle had supposed, he was a fellow servant with all who obey

the commands of God. There is nothing to indicate the identity of this person, but it is probable that previous to this interview he had lived upon the earth in human form.

*The fellow servant
with John.*

The evidence which has been deduced from the Scriptures must prove convincing to all who admit the credibility and authority of these writings. The incidents are clearly narrated and the facts are definitely stated. They are open to only one form of interpretation. They leave no room for doubt that the life of the soul continues after the body which it once had inhabited has crumbled into dust.

*The evidence of
Scripture.*

There is a large class of people who believe that the spiritualistic phenomena and manifestations of modern times prove that the soul does not perish with the body. The claim is made that a great many persons living upon the earth have occasional communications from their departed relatives and friends. It is also asserted that a person with special gifts, who is sometimes described as a psychic, or more frequently as a medium, can enable the living and the dead to converse with each other. Some go even farther than this, and hold that without the intervention of another person they can have real communion with the spirits of dear ones who have been called away from this world. But more frequently the message from the unseen realm is delivered by some person whose services have been requested by the one who desires to learn the condition of friends who have departed this life. If these claims could be substantiated, and proof that the alleged communications are real, and not imaginary, could be supplied, the evidence that there is a future life for the soul would be complete. The doctrine of the immortality of the individual would not be proved, but the evidence in its favor which has already been noted would be materially strengthened.

*The claims of
Spiritualists.*

No honest and intelligent investigator will deny that many of the phenomena which are classed as spiritualistic manifestations are really wonderful. Neither will he doubt that a large number of psychics are thoroughly conscientious. But before he has pursued his inquiries very far, he will be fully convinced that many of the alleged performances are fraudulent and that a large number of mediums are impostors. Of the latter not a few are vile in character and outra-

*Wonderful phe-
nomena.*

geous in conduct. Their methods have often been exposed. Deception, cunning, and unlimited pretension form their stock in trade. They have been as strongly denounced by reputable mediums as they have been by people who believe that all who profess to hold communication with departed spirits are unworthy of confidence. The claims of such parties are not entitled to the slightest degree of consideration.

Yet, after all due allowance has been made for intentional deception, for errors in judgment, and for mistakes in observation, there are still many things pertaining to these manifestations which are marvelous in themselves and for which natural science has not been able to furnish an adequate explanation.

Cases in which psychics have moved tables without touching them with any portion of their material bodies, and have, when completely blindfolded, read sealed letters regarding the contents of which they had no previous knowledge, have become too common to cause any great degree of surprise. While in the trance state mediums have often displayed intellectual powers of which they were not conscious, or at least which they could not command while in their normal condition. It is not unusual for a medium to tell a visitor, who may be an entire stranger, many things which occurred long ago and of which he had not thought for years. The names of his relatives who have died, and perhaps the dates upon which they passed away, may be correctly stated, though the medium never knew any member of the family and was never acquainted with any one who could have furnished the information.

Then, too, there are exhibitions of still more remarkable physical powers than those which have been noted, and which, like the others, are said to be due to the aid of spiritual beings. But, so far as the purposes of this work are concerned, by much the most important claim of the medium is that of placing the living and the dead in direct communication. It is asserted that the departed can and often do inform their friends, through the agency of the psychic, where they are, and describe with more or less of detail the conditions of the new existence. In many cases, however, the medium merely claims to see the departed and describe the home and the mental state of the soul, but does not profess to deliver messages from the spirit world.

Many of the phenomena attending both the physical and the

psychical exhibitions of some of the more noted mediums are almost too wonderful for belief. They startle the inquirer, and in not a few instances they lead to the immediate acceptance of all the claims of what is known as modern spiritualism. But while the genuineness of many of the cases which are cited as proof that the claims which are made in behalf of this system of belief is not to be questioned, and the honesty of many mediums is fully admitted, it does not follow that the phenomena are, either wholly or in part, due to the activity of the spirits of men who have inhabited this world. If spiritual agency were admitted, it would still be possible for the power to be exerted by other spirits than those which had ever lived in the human form.

*Not necessarily
due to the agency
of spirits.*

In another section the subject of communication with departed friends will be considered. It is intensely interesting in itself, and cannot properly be omitted from any extended inquiry regarding the condition of the dead, but in its bearing upon the question of the immortality of the soul it is only of minor importance. We do not need to see air, or heat, or electricity, to know that they exist. We do not need to see, or to have communication with, our friends in the other world to be reasonably sure that they retain life and consciousness. Concerning spiritual existence we have evidences of a higher nature than those which are furnished by the physical senses.

The importance of man in the scale of being makes it highly probable that he will not cease to exist at death. He is at the head of creation. The animal world is subject to his control. Wherever he cultivates the ground, the vegetable kingdom is brought under his sway. The forces of nature have been impressed into his service. By his mechanical inventions he has to a great extent overcome the barriers which time and space have offered to the accomplishment of his purposes. He crosses oceans as though they were but narrow streams, and causes the lightning to carry his messages to all parts of the earth. His triumphs in these and similar directions have been marvelous, and there is reason to suppose that he has as yet only commenced the conquest of a realm in which he is to have almost unlimited dominion. In power and in kind man is a greatly superior being. It is incredible that he should perish like the creatures and the things over which he now has control.

*The dignity of
man.*

The character of the intellectual powers of man makes it very probable that he will survive the event of death. In all of the period of his active life he is constantly looking forward to something different and, he hopes, better *Provides for the future.* than the present condition. He is continually planning for next week, or next year, or some more distant time. The boy longs for the enjoyments which come with the opening of manhood. The young man desires to establish a home, and to enter the sphere of active life. When a later stage is reached, the plans have to do with his declining days. This is a strong indication that there is something awaiting the soul beyond this world. If God had made man only for the present, He would doubtless have made him, in this respect, as He made the beast of the field. In the animal world there is but little care for the future. If present desires are satisfied, all is well. But man cannot be contented with this. Thought passes from stage to stage of the present life and projects itself far beyond the bounds of time. Man has an intuitive desire to provide for a life to come.

His eager pursuit of knowledge is another indication that man has been designed for a broader field of action than this world affords. If he succeeds in solving one difficult problem, he immediately commences the study *Intellectual progress.* of another. He presses on, regardless of difficulties. The farther he penetrates into the secrets of nature, the more anxious he becomes to solve the mysteries which still remain. And the more he learns, the broader the field of possible knowledge appears, and the smaller is the estimate which he places upon the sum of his acquisitions. Newton, whose intellect was of the highest order and whose discoveries gave him immortal fame, said: "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." Laplace, the famous mathematician and astronomer, is on record as saying that "What we know is inconsiderable; what we do not know is immeasurable."

Many other men of brilliant intellect and great achievement have given similar testimony concerning themselves. Great as their accomplishments have been, these men have realized that

all they had done amounted only to the partial exploration of the merest border of a vast field of knowledge. The fact that God has given to man such great powers of mind, and such a limitless field for their exercise here, must be regarded as a very strong intimation that there is something in reserve for the soul in another world.

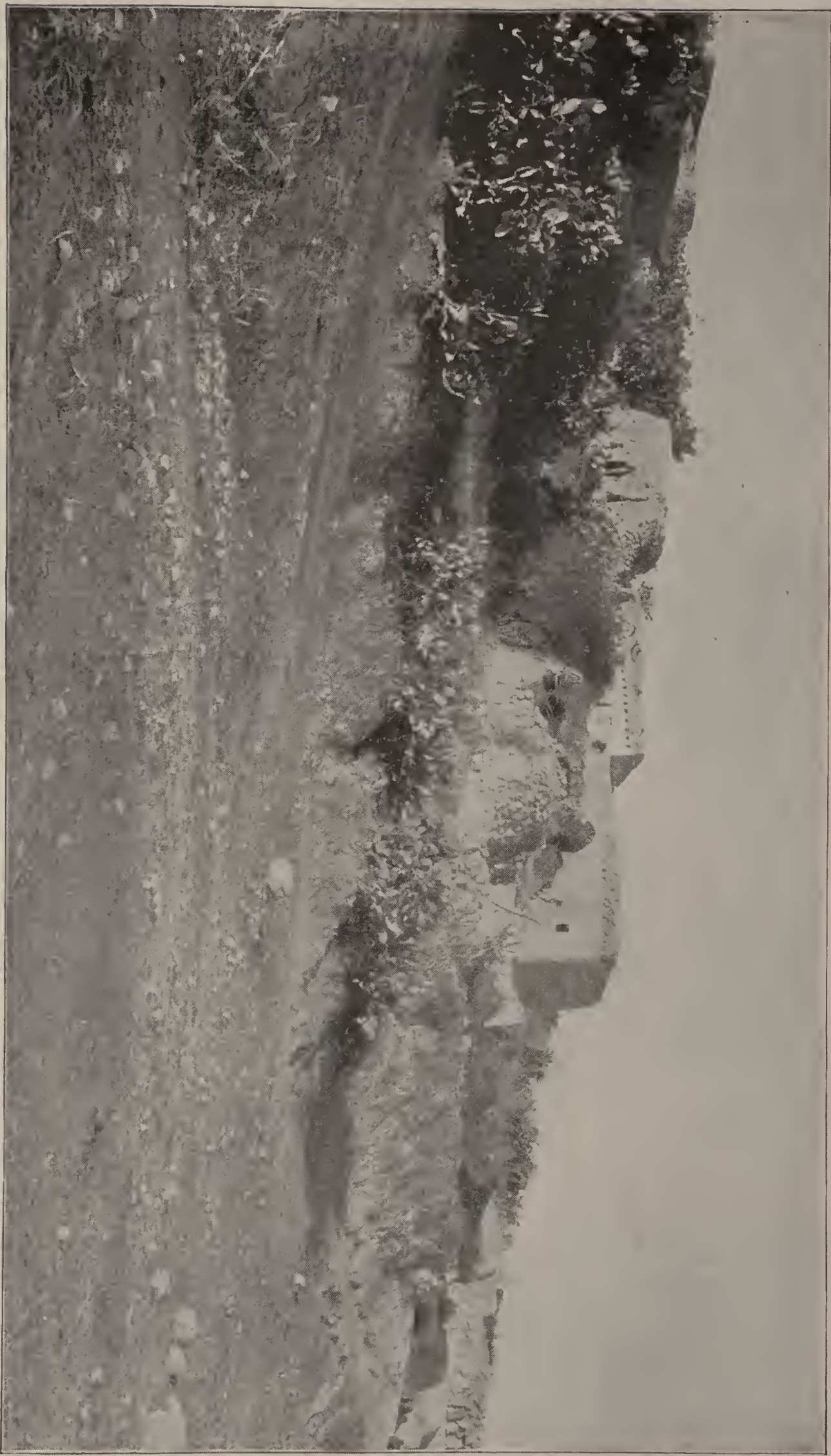
It is a trite saying that man is never satisfied. Even under the most favorable conditions he is in a state of unrest. He

Unrest. never reaches the limit of his desires. If he makes wealth the great object of his life, he finds, after it is secured, that it does not satisfy the longings of his heart. His success may exceed the wildest dreams of his youth, and yet he finds that in his inmost nature there are cravings which no amount of money and no degree of luxury can satisfy. If he strives for fame, or power, or any of the other objects of worldly ambition, he finds, when success is attained, that deep down in his heart there is a feeling that the real good has not been secured. He is still dissatisfied.

The brief but expressive comment upon life, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," which has come as a despairing wail down the centuries, and which will be heard until the end of time, was not made by a man who had failed to win the prizes and enjoy the pleasures of the world. Neither was it the petulant exclamation of one who was irritated by some unusual occurrence and who would soon regain his accustomed cheerfulness. It was the expression of the sober judgment of a man of brilliant intellect, whose portion from his early years had been glory, and honor, and wealth, and power. Solomon did not complain of the difficulty of obtaining the things which he desired. He had all the earthly blessings that heart could wish. Yet all the luxury and splendor amid which he lived could not satisfy the longings of his soul.

So it is, and so it will be, wherever man is found. He will never be satisfied with the things of earth. Multitudes suffer the keenest disappointment because they cannot obtain the things for which they strive. And multitudes of others are equally disappointed because the things for which they have labored so hard fail to give the happiness which it was supposed that their possession would bestow.

This dissatisfaction with the things of this world is a part of



THE VILLAGE OF EN-DOR.

the nature of man. His instincts are higher than those of earth. He was not made to find perfect contentment in this world. One of the great philosophers has declared that man "is not so constituted as to rest and be satisfied in any possession or enjoyment whatsoever." He cannot, like the animal, be made happy by a favorable environment. It is not sufficient that he has everything that is necessary for his physical comfort. He has a deeper nature than that which has to do with outward things, and this nature must have something higher and nobler than the visible and the material in which to rest. This is a strong evidence that life does not end in this world. For if God had not designed that man should have a future existence, He surely would not have implanted in his soul this inextinguishable longing for something better than earth can give.

Then, too, there are certain elements of character which indicate that the existence of man is not to be limited to the present life. Patriotism, heroism, and self-sacrifice are qualities which are not subject to natural laws and which *Noble qualities.* cannot be gauged by material standards. It is incredible that the man who will suffer martyrdom rather than yield an iota of what he believes to be the truth should perish like an ownerless dog. The patriot who places his life at the disposal of his country, and the man who cheerfully sacrifices himself in order to save his fellows, exhibit qualities which are far above anything which pertains only to the earth. The beast will fight for its young, but will witness the slaughter of its companions unmoved. Man not only braves danger for those of his own household, but he toils for the ignorant, fights for the oppressed, and even lays down his life for the sake of people whom he has never seen. The men who have sacrificed themselves for the uplifting of our common humanity form an innumerable host. We cannot believe that they have perished. Such characters as theirs are not to be reduced to dust.

In the quiet walks of life, unknown to the world, there are millions of men, and women, and children who day by day are waging the conflict of life with as true a heroism as ever soldier displayed upon the battlefield. Fathers toil long and hard for their families, weary and careworn mothers sacrifice themselves for their children, and many a child works early and late to aid the parents in maintaining the home. And in city and country,

especially among the poor who are not able to provide for themselves the comforts which the rich can secure, the kindly ministrations of neighbors and friends to the sick and the unfortunate speak of the possession of something which our higher natures assure us ought not to perish with the body.

The same characteristics are also exhibited by many to whom fortune has been more favorable. The endowment of hospitals for the sick and the injured; the gifts to institutions which have been established for the physical, mental, and moral betterment of the poor and the discouraged; and, in multitudes of cases, the kindly personal ministrations, as well as the substantial aid bestowed upon the needy, are standing proofs that the qualities of human nature are not dependent upon outward circumstances or conditions. There is that in the human heart which responds to the call of distress, which leads to the sacrifice of self for the benefit of others, which is above the physical nature, and which it is impossible to suppose that God would bestow upon creatures for whom He had made no provision beyond that of the little measure of this earthly life.

The fact that in all ages man has had an instinctive and a persistent desire to worship a being higher than himself is another evidence that his soul is immortal. We
Desire to worship. know that various other instincts have their uses, and we are justified in believing that this, too, has some wise and beneficent purpose. Its presence cannot be accounted for on the ground that it is of an animal nature. There is no trace of it among the beasts. It is entirely foreign to their habits, and greatly above their capacities. If man were nothing but an animal, he could not have the aspirations for a higher and purer life which so often stir the minds and hearts of the human race. The longing for communion with God, which has formed one of the purest and noblest sentiments of the good in all ages, can have no adequate explanation if man is to perish at death.

Still another indication of the immortality of the soul is found in the possession by man of the moral sense called conscience.

Conscience. This mysterious faculty, silently, but forcibly and persistently, reminds man that he is responsible for his conduct, and leads him to look forward to a time upon which his whole earthly career will be thoroughly reviewed by a Being who has power to reward the good and punish the wicked.

The constant call to duty, the sharp reprimands of this vigilant monitor when a great wrong has been done, the earnest efforts to find plausible excuses for conduct which, though not regarded as criminal, has not been in strict accordance with the standards of right living, and the only half-concealed fear of the wicked that, however they may prosper here and now, it will not be well with them when they have come under the dominion of death, — all point in one direction. They tell of a life beyond the tomb.

The power of conscience and the fear of retribution cannot be classed with superstitions or charged to ignorance. They move the higher nations as well as those which are lower in the scale of civilization, and influence the individuals who have made the greatest attainments in knowledge and in virtue as truly, and even more forcibly, than they do the ignorant and the degraded. They are inseparable from the nature of man; and the conclusion is reasonable, it may almost be said to be necessary, that the God who made man, and who placed within him this moral guide, had reference to something which, in duration and importance, far transcends the things of earth.

The natural sense of justice in the minds of men calls for a continuance of existence after death. Much of the evil which prevails in this world goes unpunished. Might triumphs over right. The innocent often suffer with A demand of justice. the guilty, and not infrequently instead of the guilty. When it is administered in its purest form, human law cannot give even-handed justice to all who are nominally under its protection. Innumerable cases of wrong are never brought to the attention of human courts. And in numberless cases in which the law is invoked, the witnesses are not all truthful, and the evidence is so conflicting that a just decision cannot be obtained. There are also the common limitations of humanity, which often prevent judges and juries from making proper decisions, even when there is an earnest desire to be strictly impartial. Then, too, the use of money, or of influence, often secures the release of an offender who richly deserves to be kept in confinement. In both civil and criminal cases law and justice often widely diverge.

It is a notorious fact that large numbers of men who break the laws of the land in which they live are never brought to

account. The Divine law, too, is constantly being trampled upon by multitudes. If there is no future life there will be no means of bringing these violators of law to justice. The practical effect of such an order of things is to put a premium upon wickedness. The man who succeeds by means of force or fraud is left free to enjoy what he has wrongfully obtained. The man who sacrifices himself for the benefit of others meets the same fate as the one who sacrifices the interests of others to his own advancement. No matter how wicked a man may be, if he succeeds in escaping punishment here he will never be made to suffer for his iniquity. If there is no hereafter, laws are of small account; and the idea of justice is altogether out of place in the human mind.

There is something in man which resents such a condition. His sense of justice cries out against it. In his inmost soul there is a conviction that wickedness ought to be punished, that there should be an ample justification of those who have been wrongfully accused, and that there should be reparation for those who have been outrageously injured. If there is to be no future existence, the whole plan of this life is wrong. The current sets toward evil, and the evil is not only self-perpetuating but it becomes more malignant as its tide rolls on.

It does not answer this argument for a future life to say, as some do, that good should be sought for its own sake, that a righteous life is happier than a wicked life, and that to some extent sin inflicts its own penalty. All this only touches the merest surface of the matter. The great majority of men in civilized lands believe that, in addition to what comes to man here, there will be rewards for the good and punishments for the wicked hereafter. Yet, with this immensely greater incentive than those have who believe only in the present life, they fall far short of the perfect character which God requires. Take away all hope of reward and all fear of punishment in the future, and the standard of morality would fall to a very low point. The glaring injustice of such moral conditions would quench all desires for a better life which otherwise might be cherished and strengthened.

The doctrine of rewards and punishments runs through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. And in many places it is shown that the doctrine is founded upon pure and simple justice.

Natural consequences of good and evil.

Favoritism is wholly excluded. Man has the power to choose either the right or the wrong. With that power God does not interfere, but there can be no mistake in respect to the manner in which He will deal with men after their choice has been irrevocably made. He assures all who have His word that "it shall not be well with the wicked." In many passages there is a still more emphatic statement. "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him," is one of a multitude of warnings of a similar import. And in the closing book of the Old Testament it is said that the terrible judgment of God shall fall upon the wicked, while his rich blessing shall rest upon the righteous. In the New Testament the same truths are stated again and again in the most impressive manner, and without the slightest lessening of the threatened penalty of sin.

The Scripture doctrine of rewards and punishments.

There are some who tell us that the hope of reward and the fear of punishment are unworthy motives. It is admitted that they are not the highest considerations. But God has seen fit to bring them very prominently to the attention of men, and to present them as great inducements to avoid evil and to do right. It is not for man to question His wisdom. He has promised that adequate rewards shall be bestowed upon the good and suitable punishments inflicted upon the wicked. Looking at human life from the earthly standpoint, we see that neither the promise nor the threatening is fulfilled. If the Scriptures are true, and justice is to prevail, there must be a future state of existence in which this stupendous failure of moral adjustment shall be rectified.

If there is no hereafter, the world has gone wrong from the day in which death first came to man, and it will continue to go wrong until the last member of the human race has perished from the earth. Eliminate the future life of humanity, and the right can never prevail. The traitor will secure the reward of his iniquity, and the Master will hang upon the cross. The faithful soldier may suffer for years from wounds received in the service, while the coward who avoids the place of danger may escape all harm. The man who gives his time and strength for the service of others merely throws himself away. The good and the brave are losers; the evil and the weak are the real winners in the conflict of life.

A great failure.

Such an outcome would be a gigantic wrong. It is utterly impossible in a universe that is under kindly and intelligent direction. Justice sternly demands a future life for man. If we once admit that there is a God who rules the world, and that God is good, we are compelled to believe that there is a boundless existence in reserve for the human soul.

In all that concerns humanity there is an element of mystery. Read in the light of this world only, the history of the race is

*The solution of
mysteries.*

a riddle the meaning of which no man can guess. Studied merely with respect to the present, current events cannot be explained. What in this regard is true of mankind in general is also true of individuals. Probably every human life has its mystery. In cases without number, the mystery is also a tragedy. In many instances the trouble is hidden in the heart, and the most intimate friend hardly knows of its existence. In a larger number the nature of the affliction is apparent to all with whom the person has to do. One man is born blind. Another is the victim of an accident which makes him a cripple for life. Misfortunes of various kinds pursue many others through all their active years. Weakness and a tendency to disease are a large part of the inheritance of others. The list of evils from which men suffer is almost endless, and, in one form or another, almost every man is a sufferer. We look for a reason for the prevalence of these ills. We seek a cause that shall justify these conditions. But neither reason nor justification for them can be found on this side of the grave.

There are those who tell us that misfortunes are good for men, that they are needed to make strong characters, and that

Misfortunes.

they are the very best of agencies for spurring man on to high endeavor and great achievement. But, as a rule, those who hold this doctrine either speak from observation rather than from experience, or else they look far into the future. If they have reference only to the present, these trials are great evils. Instead of aiding man in the accomplishment of his plans and purposes, they retard his progress and often prove insuperable obstacles to success.

So far as this world is concerned, it is not an advantage to any man to be blind, or crippled, or diseased, or unfortunate. And the men who have much to say about the sweet uses of adversity are usually very careful to avoid coming into close personal rela-

tions with this means of good. They believe, or think they believe, that suffering is a benefit to other people, but they have no desire to become sufferers themselves. They claim that what the world calls misfortunes are really advantages, but in their own efforts to succeed they seek an altogether different kind of assistance.

Unless we look beyond this world, the theory which these men hold is all wrong. The disasters of life are not means of advancement. Disappointment and pain are not "blessings in disguise," or in any other form. Within the range *The theory wrong.* of the earthly horizon, no explanation of the prevalence of sin and misery can be given. If man is to perish when he dies, he deserves a happier life than he can have in this world.

There are some who would make either the victim of misfortune or his ancestors responsible for the troubles which he is obliged to encounter. Those who believe in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls find the cause of human misery in the evil deeds which the individual performed in some previous state of existence. But in order to obtain any light from this source we are compelled to admit that there is a life, of some kind, beyond the grave. Those who hold that man inherits evil from his progenitors are shut up to one of two conclusions. Either there is a future life in which the evil which comes to man through no fault of his own will be remedied, or else the present government of the world is unjust.

Everywhere we see evidences that men are not treated in this world according to their deserts. The victims of accidents for which they were in no wise responsible, the men who inherit a tendency to disease, and those who, as the *Great inequalities.* effect of any one of a great number of causes, are neither strong nor capable of becoming strong, are outstripped in the race of life by men who, as far as moral worth is concerned, are far less deserving of success. It does not, in all cases, explain the matter to say that the men who fail are not as efficient as are those who succeed. Some, it is true, do not deserve success. But there are numberless cases in which men fail because they have not the physical or the mental power that must be put forth if success is to be secured.

Suppose, as some assert, that these worthy but unsuccessful men are inefficient or incompetent. The questions at once arise,

Why are they not as efficient and as competent as other people? Who made them to differ from those who are more capable? If we believe that all that occurs is under kindly and intelligent direction, we must conclude that, for some wise reason, He who rules in the affairs of individuals as truly as He controls the vast forces of the universe has given to some of His children qualities which he has withheld from others. He has made it easy for some to do what many others find it impossible to accomplish.

If the earthly life is the only existence that man is to have; if all the good he is ever to receive must be secured here and now, there is a great mystery in the manner in which the blessings of this world are distributed. If judgment were based upon the degree of success which they secure, we should be obliged to admit that some of the most wicked of men have been the special favorites of God, while many who have lived pure and noble lives have been the objects of His deepest displeasure. Such a conclusion would be an outrage both upon piety and common sense. The only reasonable solution of the mystery of this inequality is to be found in the fact that there is to be a future life of the soul.

There is a still darker problem which demands our attention. In the slums of great cities, and in the neglected portions of towns and rural settlements, a great number of children are born, who from their earliest days are surrounded by influences which constantly and powerfully tend to lead them into vice and crime. By the natural process of moral gravitation they go from bad to worse. Their tendencies, for which they are not to blame, are evil. Their surroundings, for which in their earlier years they are in nowise responsible, they cannot change until one of the principal periods in which character is formed has been passed. During their most susceptible years they breathe an atmosphere of sin. The virus of iniquity courses in their blood. When they reach an age at which they are thrown upon their own resources, their natural tendencies have become so fully developed, and have been so greatly strengthened by the precepts and examples of those by whom they have been trained and companions with whom they have associated, that they are fully prepared to enter a criminal career. Some resist the temptations to which they are exposed,

A bad environment.

and others are sought out by societies or individuals and placed under better conditions. Thus many, in all, become respectable and useful people. But there are many others who are born, and whose early days are spent, under such untoward conditions, to whom life is an unbroken term of ever increasing degradation. Such cases as these are profoundly sad. They are involved in a mystery for which no solution can be found in anything which is limited to the present life.

Then there is the great mystery of pain. There is an appalling amount of physical distress in the world. The stinging cold of winter and the torturing heat of summer bring unmeasurable misery to hundreds of thousands of the poor, and great discomfort to multitudes of people who are able to protect themselves to a considerable degree from the natural effects of these extremes of temperature. Accident or sickness brings to almost every one, and at many times, in the course of this earthly life, pain and weariness which are terribly hard to bear. All ages, all classes, and all conditions of men are subject to physical pain.

In the great mental realm there is, perhaps, a still larger amount, and a severer kind, of suffering than man is called to endure through the medium of his physical frame. Solicitude for relatives or friends who have been injured by accident or stricken by disease; apprehension regarding loved ones who are in circumstances of danger or distress, or who may be straying from the path of right; anxiety concerning what the future may bring; and care and fear as to many other things with which we all have to do, cause an amount of suffering which cannot be indicated by any terms which language can supply. Add to this the ceaseless and unspeakable sorrow for the dead which prevails wherever man is found, and we have an immensity of tribulation which only an infinite mind can comprehend.

A vast amount of misery also comes to man through the disappointments of life. Men work long and hard for things which they fail to obtain, or which prove unsatisfying if they are secured. The young man who hopes to obtain an education is obliged to give his attention to something which will bring more immediate financial returns. Or perhaps he gives his affections to one who rejects them or proves unworthy of them. The young woman gives her happiness into the keeping of a

man who makes her life miserable. Often parents are disappointed in their children, and friends find that some whom they have loved do not come up to their high ideals. In other ways, almost without number, trial and trouble and disappointment come to the children of men.

The attempt which has often been made to explain this great mystery of human suffering by its effect upon character is a dismal failure. It is true that the character of the sufferer is greatly modified by the painful experiences of life, but it is not always changed for the better. In many cases it is made a great deal worse. The tribulation which softens the hearts of some men hardens the hearts of others. But even if it did, in all cases, tend to make men better, the end would hardly justify the means if life does not continue beyond this world. If this life is all they are to have, men should strive to be happy, and it is fair to suppose that the universe would have been so constituted that they could find happiness here. The restless longing for something higher than the world can supply clearly indicates that life in this world is not the end of existence, but is merely a preparation for a better state of being elsewhere.

Besides, the unequal distribution of suffering cannot be reconciled with the theory that it is designed merely to profit the sufferer in the present world. An incalculable amount of pain comes to infants who do not live here long enough to receive benefit from its discipline. And many persons whose characters are pure and noble are great sufferers, while others, who are evidently in need of some kind of training if they are ever to be of use in this or any other world, spend their days in comparative comfort. So, while some suffer out of all proportion to the benefit which can come to them here through the agency of pain and sorrow, others escape a large part of the tribulations which are said, by some, to be required for the proper development of character.

An eminent writer has suggested the principle of vicariousness as a partial explanation of the "overplus of suffering" which many people are called to endure. This excess of ill is not for the benefit of the sufferer, but for the good of those who witness its patient endurance. "The effect of such suffering, which remains in the softening of sympathy

*An insufficient
explanation.*

*Vicarious
suffering.*

and the enlargement of heart of some witnesses of it, may have vicarious worth long after the man or the woman, who was anointed to be an example of such patience, may have outlived and forgotten all pain in the happy freedom of the other world.”¹

This view may be of aid to the sufferer, and of comfort to those who look on in helpless sympathy, provided the idea of the possibility of a future life has developed into a firm conviction. If the soul is immortal, such suffering may have its compensations, and it is undoubtedly ordered in wisdom and in love. But if death ends all, not only this excess of suffering, but all suffering which does not come as the result of violation of some natural law which is known to the sufferer must remain one of the deepest mysteries which the human mind has ever attempted to unravel.

The fact that nothing which approaches a justification for the suffering which prevails in the world can be found in what pertains to this life warrants the hope and the expectation that there is to be another state of existence. *Another life
probable.*

It indicates an immortal life of the soul. And we can rest assured that in the life to come the mystery of suffering will be clearly revealed. For God is good, and being good He must justify His dealings with the creatures who are dependent upon Him. However severe His discipline may seem to us now, it is certainly guided and measured by the tenderest love. Believing this we can, through all the pain and disappointments and disasters and afflictions of life, rest confidently in Him.

“For the Lord will not cast off forever.

For though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.”

The clouds of earth will never darken the sky of heaven. The compassion of God will be manifested to all who have held their faith in Him, and the reasons for the fiery trials through which they were called to pass while on the earth will be explained. In the glorious light of eternity the dark mysteries of time will forever disappear.

An immortal life of the soul appears to be necessary in order to insure the fulfillment of the evident purpose of God in the creation of man. Whatever view we may take as to the pro-

¹ Newman Smyth, D. D., *The Place of Death in Evolution*.

cesses attending his introduction into the world, it is certain that vast preparations were made for his coming. It matters not whether he is the child of God by virtue of a single creative act, or whether he has reached his present stage by ascending, through untold ages, from lower forms of existence. In either case it is true that he is the crowning work of the creation, and that the world itself, with all of its vast resources, was formed and perfected for his use and pleasure.

In view of all the great preparations which have been made for his coming, and for his comfort and progress while here, it seems incredible that the return of his physical frame to dust should mark the extinction of his being. Such a vast outlay demands a far greater return than this. Viewed merely from the standpoint of utility it is plain that such an outcome would cause an enormous waste. We cannot believe that such massive foundations would be laid for such an insignificant superstructure.

Not only this, but the mental and spiritual endowments of man are altogether out of proportion to his needs if he is to perish at death. In the brief time that is allotted to him here he hardly becomes qualified to use the talents with which he has been intrusted. He must spend most of his life in gaining the knowledge and experience which he needs in order to enable him to live well and to work efficiently. He hardly gains control of his powers before he is called to leave the world.

Coming at this stage of his existence, death, if it is not to be followed by life, is unutterably cruel and wasteful. "It is sad that man should perish, and perish just when he has reached his prime."¹ It is not reasonable to suppose that man does perish when he reaches this point. He was evidently made for something higher and more enduring. It is not consistent with a wise ordering of things that he should drop out of existence just when he has become able to do the best work of which he has ever been capable.

The man who has had the greatest advantages, who has made the most of his opportunities, and whose life has been prolonged far beyond the ordinary term of human existence, has hardly more than commenced the development of his intellectual and spiritual capacities. This,

Preparations and endowments.

Destruction of being involves waste.

Life here too brief for full development.

¹ Professor Goldwin Smith, *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*.

indeed, would be true if he remained here indefinitely. For each new conquest would give him power for still greater achievement. God has endowed him with possibilities which can only be perfected in the boundless range of an immortal life.

The longest life upon earth, even when its opportunities are improved, only suffices for a beginning of the work for the performance of which the soul was endowed. But there are very few lives which approach completion, even *Less complete lives.* as it is gauged by human standards. The vast majority of those who come into the world fall by the way long before the natural limit of life is reached. Children die just as they are developing the qualities of mind and heart which make them attractive, and which give promise of usefulness. Young men and young women are called away while earnestly seeking to advance the kingdom of God in the world. The father, who is needed to maintain the home; or the mother, who seemed to have a great work to do for her children; the pastor, or the missionary, who has spent long years to qualify himself to preach the Gospel; the physician, or one who has chosen some other profession, who has just commenced to serve his fellows; and the man who labors in a humbler sphere, but with equal earnestness and sincerity, are called away while in the very beginning of their usefulness. We cannot believe that the purpose for which God created them has been fully served. It cannot be that their course is finished, that their work is done. Such incomplete lives are witnesses to the necessity of an immortal existence of the human soul. We begin to live here, we must continue to live hereafter. Holding this view of life, the great scholar and preacher, Theodore Monod, desired to have inscribed upon his tombstone the simple but expressive statement: "Here endeth the first lesson."

The continuance of life far beyond the present scene of its manifestation is needed in order to furnish compensations which the moral sense of mankind insists are due to those who have been the victims of injustice, or who have *Offers needed compensations.* failed to receive an adequate reward for unselfish services to their fellow men. It does not refute this claim for a future life to say that God allots to each individual what is best, and that we have no right to question His wisdom. If we are to have a future existence, in which there shall be suitable compensations for the

ills of the present life, we can admit that good may be brought out of evil, that all wrongs may be righted, and that everything has been ordered wisely and well.

If we limit human existence to the present life we cannot hold any such belief. We cannot see that things are "all for the best." The claim that they are just as they should be, and that man should cheerfully accept, as coming from God, whatever befalls him here, is persistently made by not a few of the wicked who glory in their wickedness. It is an argument which has been used for ages by those who have oppressed their fellows. Tyranny, and injustice, and imposition have all been supported by the plea that "whatever is, is right," and to those who have suffered, the mocking consolation has been offered that a kind and loving Father has brought these evils upon them. This world offers no redress. A future life is required in order to sustain the claim that the law of love is the law of the universe.

There are many who, without having suffered any direct injustice from their fellow men, have rendered services for which they have received no adequate reward. To such as these something in the way of compensation seems to be due. In this world there can be no proper recognition of the deeds performed. There must be another life if full acknowledgment is ever to be made.

It is not enough to say that the sweet consciousness of duty performed is all that is to be expected. We could be satisfied with it ourselves, but we instinctively feel that it is not all that other people should receive. The martyr who dies for the truth is doubtless sustained by a good conscience and a lofty faith, but if there is no hereafter he is very inadequately rewarded for the pains of martyrdom and the loss of life. Neither would the recompense be sufficient to sustain the family that is obliged to struggle on without its natural protector. The patriot who dies in the service of his country has a certain kind of reward in the feeling that he has done his duty; but if he perishes at death the reward is small compared with the loss of his life and himself.

The mother who wears out her life in caring for her sick child may be sustained by the love in her own heart, and by the hope that in later years there will be some return of love and care. This gives a partial, but certainly not a full, reward. Then, too,

there are many cases in which health is sacrificed and life is shortened by devotion to the aged, who, on account of extreme feebleness of body and mind, can never, in this world, make any return for the kindness which they receive. And there are many other ways in which self is sacrificed to duty. The familiar case of Charles Lamb, who gave up his plans and prospects of a happy home with the woman of his choice in order that he might properly care for his afflicted sister is only one of numberless pathetic instances of the sacrifice of self for the benefit of others.

These noble examples of self-sacrifice are a blessing to the world. They give a glory to the earthly life which it otherwise could not have. Those who practice this virtue are helpful not only to those whom they directly serve, but also to all who learn of their kindly deeds. And it is freely admitted they are in some measure benefited themselves. But often the good which they receive is obtained at a fearful cost. The hopes of early years are disappointed. The plans of life are broken. The flower is blasted in the bud. All through life there will be a strain of sadness. The sunlight will not be wholly darkened, but a shadow will always be visible, and the thought of what "might have been" will bring an unutterable sadness to the soul.

If this life is the end of human existence, all this generous effort will fail of its proper reward. And unless there is something beyond what is visible, something which per-^{*If this life is all.*}tains to a higher and a more enduring state than the present life, all who, through no fault of their own, are called to endure extreme suffering, make great sacrifices, meet keen disappointments, or fail in high endeavors, are in a pitiable condition. When parents are called to mourn the loss of a son who was unspeakably dear to them, and upon whom they had commenced to lean in their declining years; or a daughter, in whom their heartstrings were entwined, is called away; when a lover is snatched by death from the one to whom eternal devotion had been pledged; when parents are taken from children, brothers and sisters are separated, and friends are torn asunder by the grim destroyer of life, — the human heart cries out for something that shall compensate it for its incalculable loss. If we look only at the present world, all sources of consolation

fail. The relentless mill of inevitable affliction which has crushed others to-day may crush us to-morrow, and its pitiless work will go on until the last human being has perished from the earth.

We see men and women who are constantly on the altar of sacrifice. We cheer them for their heroic devotion, believing that God has called them and they have answered the call. When they die we can but feel that some time and somewhere they will receive — what they have not had in this world — a full reward for all their toils and pains. As we stand by their graves we are confident that they have not perished. We are sure that —

*Noble lives deserve
to be continued.*

“In the wreck of noble lives
Something immortal still survives.”

If any reader is inclined to say that this is a selfish view, and feels that man is not justified in hoping for anything in the way of compensation for suffering patiently endured and duty nobly performed, let him study the commands of God and see how, in both the Old and the New Testaments, the call to sacrifice and toil is united with the promise of rich compensation. Let him remember, too, that hosts of God's children, from the earliest ages to the present day, have, in the midst of their trials and their toils, had in view a “great recompense of reward.” The Apostle to the Gentiles was one of the most self-sacrificing of men, but he had much to say about the reward which he expected to receive, and which all others who toiled and suffered in like manner with himself also should obtain. And as he inquired what it should profit him that he had “fought with beasts at Ephesus,” if there is no future life, so every other man may properly ask himself what gain he is to have if, after a life of conflict with self and sin, he is to pass out of existence at death.

One of the principal reasons for accepting the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul is to be found in the character of God. This character is made known to us in His works and His word. From these sources we learn that He is a Being of almighty power and infinite perfections. It is sure that His character must stand in a very certain and a very definite relation to His dealings with His creatures. If He has all power, and is infinitely wise and good, He must

*The character of
God.*



NEW "OLD SOUTH" CHURCH, BOSTON, MASS.

exhibit these qualities in all that He directs and all that He permits in His dealings with men.

We cannot regard the ever-present and ever-active God as an aimless being. The mighty energies which are incessantly flowing forth from Him are directed to the accomplishment of certain purposes which are clearly and constantly in His mind. These purposes are worthy of the efforts which are put forth for their fulfillment. There is a proper correspondence between what is attempted and what is performed. The plant, the tree, the bird, and the beast appear to answer, at least approximately, the purpose for which they were designed. We can suppose that God is satisfied with them. But unless we look beyond the present life we cannot have such a supposition regarding man. He falls very far short of what he evidently was intended to be and to do.

In the vegetable and animal worlds a wonderful law of adjustment prevails. The plants of tropical regions are adapted to hot climates, while those of other zones are equally well fitted for the conditions under which they live.

The purposes of God.

Adaptation to environment.

Animals that have their homes in almost desert regions are very different, in nature and in requirements, from those which live in fertile sections. The animals of the mountains are widely different from those which live in valleys or on the plains; and those which live in the water vary greatly in form and requirements from those which remain upon the land. This adjustment to conditions, or environment as it is termed, is simply marvelous. So far as the vegetable and animal kingdoms are concerned, the means of supply of all great wants are obtained with comparative ease. Under the natural order of things the plant flourishes and the animal is contented. All that they need is found in this world. But this is very far from being the case with man. He has a nature that cannot be satisfied with the things of earth. His environment is too meagre to permit the development of his wonderful powers. This world cannot supply his needs.

In many places, and perhaps in all ages, there has been a feeling that man had a higher parentage than that of earth. Various traditions have represented him as descended from the gods. As intelligence has increased, this feeling has gained in strength. The poets and the philosophers

God is our Father.

taught that man was the offspring of a being far greater and nobler than himself.

This great truth, of which the outlines were dimly discerned by the unaided reason of man, has been emphatically stated in the Scriptures. Here we find the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. This relationship of Father and son is not limited to the relatively good, but extends also to the evil and the unthankful. It is true that there is a special tie between the Father and His penitent and obedient children, just as an earthly father regards a good son differently from what he does a bad son, but this does not change the fact of the relationship to the one who does wrong. Not merely those who try to serve Him, but all men live and move and have their being in God.

The truth of this doctrine has often been denied. Many have attempted to limit the Fatherhood of God to those who were obedient. They have claimed that, by reason of his sin, man had forfeited all claim to sonship, that in his natural state he is not a son, and that he can only become one by repentance and reformation. But this does not seem to be in accordance with the general tenor of Scripture or with the dictates of reason. God says to every man, "My son, give me thine heart." He requires, from each and from all, what may justly be required of children — and of children only. The Jews were a rebellious race, yet as a people they could look to God and say, "Thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: Thou, O Lord, art our Father." Then, too, the prayer which Christ taught His disciples, and in which God is addressed as "Our Father which art in heaven," became a part of the Scriptures and was evidently designed for the use of all men. It is incredible that the inspired writers should have given us this prayer, and have referred, as they so often did in the Gospels, to God as our Father, if the relationship which this term indicates had not been real and universal.

From the idea of the Fatherhood of God we get the now popular doctrine of the Brotherhood of man. If the former can be fully established the latter must follow. If one fails the other cannot be sustained. If the Fatherhood of God is limited to those who have accepted His call to repent and turn to Him, the great mass of men are not brothers.

*A doctrine of
Scripture.*

*The Brotherhood
of man.*

They have no common Father and no bond of union. They are not entitled to use the Lord's prayer. They are waifs in the world.

It does not seem just, or scriptural, to so limit the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. It is true that we are wayward, and sinful, and degraded, but we are children notwithstanding our wanderings. The relatively good are sinners as truly, though not to the same extent, as are the relatively bad. All men have "come short of the glory of God," but they all were made in His image, and they must still be, the most sinful as well as those who have not wandered as far from the fold, the children of God. The prodigal remained a son, even though he strayed far from home. Whether he repents and returns, or persists in remaining away forever, the man who strays from God cannot change the fact that his parentage was divine. As one of the ablest and best of the preachers of recent times has said: "Man is, and has never ceased to be, the child of God."¹

If this is true, if we really are the children of God, it is certain that He will treat us as children deserve to be treated. Now children are under authority and are subject to correction and discipline by their parents. But by virtue of the relationship which has been established they are entitled to receive constant and loving care. This is due on the ground of simple justice. It is also a sentiment of common humanity, as well as a dictate of affection. No parent who has any proper conception of the duties and privileges which spring from this tie of kindred ever thinks of withholding this care and affection from his children.

One of the frequent figures in which God represents Himself to men is that of a Father who is interested in his children. Both the Old and the New Testaments abound in such references. He is a "Father of the fatherless." When the earthly father and mother have forsaken their offspring the Lord will supply the needs of the deserted ones. As manifested in Christ, He is proclaimed by Isaiah as the "Everlasting Father." Through Jeremiah He announces Himself "a Father to Israel." Time after time Christ told His hearers of their Father, and Paul wrote of "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." These, and many other passages which might be quoted, show

¹ Phillips Brooks, D. D., *Sermon on the Perfect Life*.

that God cares for and watches over all of His children upon the earth. Even though we wander from Him, we are not cut off from His interest and attention. His appeals for our return are urgent, and tender, and unceasing. We may become objects of His pity, but we shall not cease to be objects of His love.

If we look only to the present life, we shall not find these representations of the character of God, as it relates to the care of His children, fully sustained. Individuals, communities, states, and nations all have their calamities; many of them have their tragedies. The pages of history are darkened by the record of great wrongs which have never been redressed, and of suffering, much of which was undeserved, for which there has been no compensation. We are appalled by the multitude and the magnitude of the evils of life. "Heart and mind would reel in contemplation of them, but for the thought that the present life is but as a lightning flash in the eyes of infinite love, which has eternal ages before it for the fulfillment of its work." ¹

It is only by looking at this world as a place of education and discipline that we can understand how the inspired declaration that "God is love" can be harmonized with the suffering of man. He has power to prevent this suffering, but He does not use it for this purpose. Therefore, if the present life closes human existence, it cannot be shown that God really loves and cares for His children. But we believe, we know, that He does love and care for us. And so we assert the necessity, and the certainty, of a future life in which there shall be a complete manifestation of His fatherly affection and solicitude.

The revelations which God made of Himself to the patriarchs and the prophets in the olden time must be accepted as evidence that they, at least, were to have a future life. He called Abraham His friend, and His relation with Enoch was one of very close communion. He made covenants with Noah, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. He "spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." He made a compact with David concerning the throne of Israel, and in direct personal communication often revealed Himself to the men whom He had chosen as the messengers of His mercy or His judgment.

*Revelations of
God.*

¹ E. De Pressensé, *The Ancient World and Christianity*.

It is inconceivable that God should have entered into such relations unless they were to be permanent. He in whose sight a thousand years

“Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night,”

could not be expected to make these covenants and communications with creatures whose existence is as brief as the earthly life of man. Not only this, but long after they had passed from earth, God proclaimed Himself to Moses *Permanent relationship.* as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” In refuting the doctrine of the Sadducees, who denied a future life, Christ stated this fact, with the simple, but unanswerable comment that “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” If He was their God in the time of Moses, there was conclusive evidence that these men had survived the event of death.

The cases thus far noted are those of great leaders of Israel. In point of character these men were far superior to the vast majority of their race. Looking at the matter from *Covenants with the people.* a merely human point of view, we should say that they were much more worthy of a continued existence than were the masses of the people. Without additional evidence we could not feel sure that because these eminent individuals did not perish at death all men would have a future life. But we find that, at many times, God made covenants with the people themselves. We also find that, in spite of their frequent murmurings, and wanderings, and rebellions, He led them in a wonderful manner, and at length established them as a nation in the land which He had promised as their inheritance. This shows that His love and care were not limited to the great and the good, but were manifested to all, and it justifies the hope and expectation that all will share in a life beyond that of the present world.

In a certain sense the Children of Israel were a peculiar people. They were selected for special training in order to lead the nations to a proper conception of the one true God, and to be an object lesson for all coming time of the way in which He deals with men. But the advantage of their position was only for a limited period. The “wall of partition” was broken down. The fact that God’s love and care embrace the whole family of man was made known. His dealings with the race which He

so marvelously guided and protected should inspire confidence in every human heart. His faithfulness in the past is an ample pledge of His fidelity in the future.

Each of the evidences thus far noted, which refer to the character of God, have weight. All converge to a single conclusion.

The work of Christ. But the supreme reason for believing that the soul of man is immortal is to be found in the work of Jesus Christ in the world. Unless man is to live hereafter no possible explanation of this work can be found. If he ceases to be at death there was no apparent necessity for such a work. For its beneficent results are very largely to come in the future. The present good which it brings is only incidental. If this had been all that was to have been gained we can be sure that Christ never would have left the glory which He had with the Father, and have undergone the humiliation and suffering which His life and death on earth entailed.

Then, too, Christ had much to say about burdens, and afflictions, and cross-bearing, and self-sacrifice. He told men to count the cost before they cast in their lot with Him. He offered to help them bear the burdens and endure the trials which would come, and He often spoke of a reward which all who proved faithful to Him should receive. But over and over again He emphasized the fact that the reward was not to come in this world. It was to be held in reserve while His followers were here, but would be bestowed upon them in a life beyond the scene of their conflicts and sufferings. Thus, to all who believe the Bible, the work and the teaching of Christ conclusively prove that man has an immortal soul.

Some, though very far from all, pronounced evolutionists have held that the life of man is limited to the present world. Such

Evolution and the doctrine of immortality. a conclusion is not necessary, and such an outcome does not seem probable. To one who holds that the physical frame of man has reached its present degree of perfection by a vast course of progression from a lower to a higher stage, but that the spiritual nature came directly from the Creator, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul does not present any special difficulty. It does not conflict with the theory of evolution.

It is not my purpose to state arguments either for or against this theory. If the agency of God is recognized in the creation

of man, it does not sacrifice any vital principle to hold that the method adopted was that of development instead of direct formation. A man may be an evolutionist and also be a sincere and exemplary Christian; or he may utterly reject the theory of evolution, hold that the older interpretations of the Bible and Nature were literally correct, and yet be wholly destitute of the principles, and an entire stranger to the practices, of a genuine Christianity. What is here intended is to show that the theory, so often pronounced contrary to the Christian religion, is not materialistic, and that it really offers very strong presumptive evidence of the immortality of the human soul.

The evolutionist traces the progress of creation from the inorganic to the vegetable, the vegetable to the lower animal forms, and from these up to man. Some hold that this advance was the result of the unbroken processes of a law of Nature or of God. Others believe, and it seems upon much stronger evidence, that there have been, at various points, direct creative acts. But all agree that man stands at the head of the vast system of development, and that, though he is still capable of great improvement, he is the end for which all this marvelous work has been done. They believe that better men will come upon the earth, but they do not expect that any beings with nobler powers, or greater possibilities, will ever appear.

The evolutionist also believes that the world itself was developed expressly for man, to be the scene of his education, the home in which he should spend his earliest years. But, magnificent as is this world, vast as are the stores which it contains, and wonderful as are the agencies and appliances which it offers for his service, it does not furnish anything which approaches an adequate field for the exercise of the powers and the development of the capacities with which man has been endowed. The conditions are too limited, and the time is too short, for man to make more than a mere beginning of life in this world.

If this whole process of evolution, bringing the universe out of chaos and, by innumerable changes which required unnumbered millions of ages for their completion, fitting the world to be the habitation of man, and raising man himself to the grand estate of an intellectual and moral being, has had humanity as its central object and final goal, it seems not only improbable, but impossible, that the soul should perish at death. If death

is the end, the long record of progress must close with what man is here and now. The process of evolution brings him into possession of wonderful powers, and death cuts him off before he has had time or place in which to use them. All that up to this point has been gained is lost, and lost forever. Instead of a "sublime and eternal path of progress" for the soul, the path ends at death. After all the development from lower forms up to man there is a falling back into inanimate dust. The end is no better than the beginning. The great, and for ages upon ages apparently successful, struggle toward perfection utterly fails. Just as victory seemed sure there has come an appalling and an irretrievable disaster.

From the standpoint of evolution the argument for continued existence after death is unanswerable. For such enormous expenditure there must be immeasurably greater returns than can ever come in time. If for millions of ages God has been working through the mighty forces of nature to develop man, it may confidently be asserted that He will not allow the grand results which thus far have been attained to perish so soon.

The reasons which have been given in support of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul are numerous and weighty. They are drawn from widely different sources, and they vary greatly in their value, but they all lead to the same conclusion. Their united testimony is very strong.

*A revelation
needed.*

We have obtained a great deal of light from nature, and from science; from the constitution of man, and from the character of God. But our final appeal must be to revelation. Regarding physical things we learn a great deal by observation and experience, but no human observation can penetrate the veil which separates the present state of existence from what lies beyond the event of death, and until an exchange of worlds has been made no one can determine by experience what occurs to the soul after it leaves the body. So, in order that we may obtain full assurance concerning a future state of being, we need a revelation from the God who made us, who understands our needs, and who knows our destiny. Not only this, but we also need to have the revelation so fully confirmed that we can be sure that it really came from Him.

All of this we have in the Bible and in the life of Jesus Christ. Many references to Scripture, and to the work of the Saviour,

have already been made, but a somewhat fuller statement seems to be required. In the Old Testament there are intimations of the immortal nature of the soul. *Has been supplied.*

These are dim at first, but they become clearer in the later books. In the New Testament the doctrine is clearly and definitely stated many times, and is enforced by the strongest arguments and the most convincing proofs. Christ boldly proclaims His power over death. He calls back to their bodies departed souls, and the persons thus raised from the dead continue to live as though they had not died. He professes to have complete power over His own life, and asserts His ability to lay it down and to take it again. He dies, and on the third day from that of his decease He comes from the tomb in the full vigor of life. Hostile criticism has done its utmost to discredit the sacred narrative, but the facts of the death of Christ and His reappearance in human form have never been disproved. The evidence is so clear and abundant that the vast majority of intelligent scholars admit that Christ actually died and rose from the dead. By His own deeds, and in His own person, He conclusively proved that He had absolute power over death, both as it related to others and to Himself.

It was one of the leading doctrines of Christ that this life is only a mere fragment of the existence of man. Over and over again, in the most emphatic and unequivocal language, He asserted that it matters but little how a man fares in this world. This was not on account of indifference to human welfare in the present life, but because He knew that the real, the vital interests, lie beyond. He warned His disciples that they would have to endure many and great tribulations here, but He promised them the reward of eternal life, under happier conditions, if they remained faithful in the work to which they had been called. This was the prize for which He urged His hearers to strive, and which He assured them could be obtained by all. *The promise of life.*

The desire and the expectation of a future life, which have been common in the world, have never of themselves alone given a firm and an abiding faith in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. In the midst of darkness there was a groping for the truth, but it was not clearly revealed until Christ brought light and life to the world. The *The influence of Christ.*

faith of the greatest philosophers who were friendly to the doctrine, but who had no knowledge of His Word, sometimes wavered. There was a marked contrast in the attitude of Socrates and that of Paul as they neared the close of the earthly state. The one was calm, hopeful, but somewhat uncertain. The other was triumphant. There was no doubt in the mind of Paul. He exulted in the thought that he was about to depart. He was sure of a future and a glorious life. What the Greek philosopher dimly saw, the great Apostle clearly beheld. They were equally earnest in their search for the truth; but to the one Christ had not been revealed, while to the other He had brought the truth of immortality to light.

What the teaching of Christ did for Paul it should do for every Christian. He has, as truly as the Apostle had, the assurance that Christ has triumphed over death, and that *Confidence justified.* He will give the victory to all who trust him. In many cases faith is weak, but in many others it rises to a sublime height. It is said of Theodore Parker that with him "immortality was no wish or dream or hope. It was more than belief: it was knowledge. He *knew* he was immortal, he felt it in every fibre of his soul."¹

We have in Christianity a certainty regarding a future life that is not found in any worldly philosophy, or in any other form of religion. It offers a reason for confidence which cannot be found elsewhere. In the triumph of Christ over death, and the full assurance that His followers shall obtain a similar victory, we have ample grounds for belief in our own immortality.

The vast procession of humanity constantly moves along. Death is ever busy, but the places of those whom he calls from the ranks are filled by others who are added to the race by birth. We talk of the dead. We should speak of them as the departed. They greatly outnumber those who walk upon the earth. We do not see them, but they live as truly as do any of the human family who have not yet passed through the gate which we call death.

The dead still live.

"It is a thought as dread and high,
And one to wake a fearful thrill,
To think, while all who live must die,
The dead, the dead, are living still!"

¹ Joseph Henry Allen, *Our Liberal Movement in Theology*.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY

IN the form in which it is most generally received, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul recognizes a future life as the natural inheritance of man. According to this theory our first parents were created with immortal souls, and this power of endless life has been transmitted to their descendants. Immortality is an endowment from God. It is a possession which cannot be taken from the owner, and which cannot be alienated by him. Life that has commenced upon earth must go on forever.

*Common form of
the doctrine of
immortality.*

In Christian lands, and particularly among those who accept the Bible as a revelation from God, a doctrine which is known as conditional immortality, sometimes also called annihilationism, has come into considerable prominence. It is not by any means a new doctrine. To some extent it was held in very early times. There were many among the ancients who did not regard the masses immortal but who believed that a favored few, who were good or great on earth, might live beyond the grave. It appeared in the philosophy of Greece and Rome. With some of the early Church Fathers it was an article of faith. In modern times it has been accepted by not a few prominent religious writers, and it is now held by a large number of people who belong to various religious sects, and many church organizations make it a leading article in their creeds.

*A modification of
the doctrine.*

The forms in which the doctrine of conditional immortality is stated by theological writers are various, but the leading idea is the same in all. This is, that immortality is not the birthright of man, not something that already belongs to him, but a great prize which he should earnestly strive to secure. In his nature he is as perishable as the plant or the animal. There is nothing within him which guarantees, or even promises, a continuance of existence after death. He is merely

*Theory of
conditionalism.*

“a candidate for immortality.” He may secure the blessing if he will, or he may fall short of its attainment. All depends upon himself. If he has a proper kind, and a sufficient degree, of faith, and his life is pure, he will effect a permanent union with God, and will secure eternal life. If this faith is wanting, or if the life is not in accordance with the principles of right, he will fall below the standard which those who are to become immortal must reach. Either at death, the judgment, or at the close of a period of punishment, the duration of which will be determined by the degree of wickedness of which he has been guilty, he will pass out of existence.

This theory is, at many points, radically opposed to the doctrine of immortality as it has been stated in the preceding chapter.

Why it is accepted. It has been accepted by many who are burdened by the fact that large numbers of men die in unrepented sin, which makes them unfit for a home in heaven, and who, as no other probation will be given, must suffer as long as they continue to exist. They feel that there should be a marked distinction between the good and the wicked, and they cannot accept the doctrine that both classes will eventually meet upon common ground, and together enjoy the blessings of a holy and an endless life. But the idea of unending misery, even for the most wicked of human creatures, seems too horrible to be entertained. So they attempt to find a refuge from this terrible outcome of human life in the theory that all who have no possible hope of happiness will be destroyed. Thus, while the wicked will sustain an indescribable loss by failing to secure the eternal happiness which they might have obtained, they will escape the fearful doom which would inevitably be their portion if their personal existence were not blotted out. The sentiment which prompts its adherents to accept this doctrine is kindly. Whether there is sufficient warrant in Scripture, and in other sources of knowledge, to justify their belief, is a question which a great number of intelligent people are compelled to answer in the negative.

If the claims of evolutionists were fully established, the doctrine of the conditional immortality of the human soul would receive considerable support therefrom. If we believe that man has come up from the lower forms of creation, and that the spiritual element of his nature is developed only by faith in God, it will be easy to see that this

Support from the theory of evolution.

higher part of himself may be too feeble to survive any great catastrophe. Whether we like to do so or not, we are compelled to admit that there are men in this world who are a great deal nearer the level of the higher animals than they should be. Of these, vast numbers are in the savage state. They are on the plane which their ancestors occupied many generations ago. They are as destitute of true religion as they are of civilization. More hopeless cases are found in enlightened lands. These are men who have had light but have refused to see. They have intelligently and persistently followed courses of iniquity which have brought them to the lowest rank of degradation which can be reached in this world. Many evolutionists hold that such men, "to all intents and purposes are but little higher than the animals, and will sink back into the animal and finally become extinct."¹

We find that life in the natural world is largely dependent upon environment. If an animal is to live and thrive, the conditions of climate and of food supply must be favorable. The same is true of trees and plants. In the struggle for existence vast numbers of animals and trees and plants perish long before their normal time. Those which are unable to conform to the conditions under which they are placed are compelled to give way to others, which are either better fitted by nature, or which have greater powers of adaptation.

Some who hold the doctrine of conditional immortality believe that the law that prevails in the animal and vegetable worlds will apply to the human soul. They claim that spiritual life comes from God, and that if a soul continuously withdraws itself from God it must perish, just as a plant perishes if it is cut off from its sources of nutrition. The result in regard to the plant is plain enough, but concerning man it is not so clear. The plant is perishable by nature. It is not certain that this is the case with man. He may be endowed with life as a possession which he cannot alienate. If he persistently wanders away from God he will be unutterably miserable. His spiritual nature will be dwarfed, and his animal nature will be his master; but it is not possible to prove that this failure to develop his higher powers will ever bring his conscious existence to an end.

¹ Lyman Abbott, D. D., *Theology of an Evolutionist*.

It has already been shown that science can neither prove nor disprove the truth of the doctrine of immortality. Still, it affords many indications that life will persist. It does not, however, aid the theory of conditionalism. It teaches that nothing is destroyed. The forms of matter may pass through an almost endless series of changes, but there is nothing in the way of destruction. The quality of matter, as we estimate it, has nothing to do with its continuance. We can no more destroy anything that we consider bad than we can cause what we regard as good to cease to exist. And it seems probable that if the souls of the good survive the event of death, the souls of the wicked will also continue to live. Of course God can intervene to preserve the good and destroy the evil, but no such interruption of the course of natural law is predicted by science.

Conditionalism receives no support from physiology or psychology. The good man is just as much benefited by a strong and healthy physical organization, or hampered by a weak and sickly one, as is the bad man. So far as our observation can enlighten us, accident and disease are as damaging to the best man in the community as they are to the worst.

As it is with the body, so it is with the mind. The appearance of the human brain is the same in the case of the sinner as it is in that of the saint. The method of mental perception is the same in both, and it is the same in a man before he accepts Christ as his Saviour, and thus, according to the conditionalist theory, is changed from a mortal to an immortal creature, as it was before this change of relationship to God was effected. Whether the soul be regarded as an entity, an influence, or a force, there is nothing revealed by science to prove that separation from the body will have any different effect upon its being and character in the case of one man than it will in the case of any other person. So far as science can show, death is just as impartial regarding the spiritual nature of man as it is in respect to his physical frame. What comes to one, comes to all.

While indications and arguments from other sources have a value which entitles them to careful consideration, the fact that the Scriptures are the principal and the only infallible source of knowledge regarding this subject must not be overlooked or ignored. Whatever the Bible plainly

*The intimations
of science.*

*Must appeal to
the Scriptures.*

teaches must be accepted as true. But in order to determine what is thus taught it will be necessary to note the general tenor of the Scriptures as a whole. Isolated passages cannot be relied upon. By skillful explanations they can be made to sustain almost any form of doctrine. It is only by a careful consideration of the connection of these passages with the matter in which they are found, and to which they are related, that we can hope to arrive at the truth.

At the very outset of an inquiry regarding the teaching of the Scriptures as to the doctrine of the conditional immortality of the human soul, we are confronted by a grave difficulty. The question of sustaining, or of failing to *Depends upon interpretation.* sustain, this doctrine turns very largely upon the interpretation of a comparatively few passages, and the force which is allowed to a small number of very common words. Those who believe that the soul is not naturally immortal, but can become imperishable by faith in Christ, hold that certain passages, which others believe to be metaphorical, are to be taken literally, and that the words life, death, destruction, and various others of a similar nature, which are often used in relation to a future state of being, or extinction of being, are to be given the same meaning that they have in secular literature, and in common conversation. They claim, therefore, that in the Bible, as elsewhere, life stands for existence, and death, which all admit is the opposite of life, must mean non-existence. According to this interpretation the living man, who still inhabits his physical frame, exists, while the man who has died has ceased to exist.

Various arguments which are used by conditionalists, in common with all other opponents of the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the human soul, have been stated in the preceding chapter. It is not necessary to refer to all of them again in detail. But some of the leading principles of this form of belief must be briefly noted in this connection.

The central point of attack upon the traditional or orthodox view, as it is often styled by those who hold the theory of conditionalism, is the nature of man. If man is immortal by virtue of his creation, there is no need of *The point of attack.* argument to prove that he will, or will not, exist forever, without regard to his moral character. But the conditionalist believes that man was not created with the necessity of eternal

existence. Immortality could have been, but was not, secured. His failure to obtain it was caused by his sin. "He was created of a perishable order of being; the gift of immortality was made dependent upon his obedience, as the inexorable condition of its bestowal; but upon his transgression that gift was withheld, and the whole man, body and soul together, doomed to perish."¹

Here the claim is made that by nature man is just as perishable as is the brute. It is true that the animal has a bodily and, in some degree, a mental life, similar to that of man. But man has also a spiritual nature with which the brute is not endowed. The possession of this higher nature, which makes him capable of communion with God, places man in a very different relation to his Creator from that which any inferior creature can sustain. It is reasonable to suppose that this wide variation in character and capacity may make an equally great difference in the destiny of the two classes of beings.

According to the Scripture narrative, God placed Adam in a garden which contained many trees which were "pleasant to the sight, and good for food," and gave him permission to eat freely of every one except "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Of this tree God commanded him not to eat. As a solemn warning against disobedience He added the penalty, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This is interpreted by the conditionalists to mean that the whole man, the soul as well as the body, was threatened with utter extinction in case of disobedience. When man sinned it is supposed that the whole being became subject to death. The body perishes first, but the soul, unless brought into living union with Christ, will pass out of existence at the judgment, or at the expiration of the term of punishment to which it may be subjected for its sins.

It is claimed that the term "death" means the same when applied to the soul as it does when used in reference to the body. As the body passes out of existence as an independent organism, so the soul will be, so far as its conscious personality is concerned, obliterated when the appointed time for its death shall come.

This view is enforced by an appeal to such texts of Scripture

¹ Rev. William Ker, *Immortality, Eternal Punishment, and the State of Separate Souls*.



RUINS OF TEMPLE AT PHILÆ. BUILT A.D. 100.

as the following: "The wicked shall perish;" "The lamp of the wicked shall be put out;" "They that strive with thee shall be as nothing, and shall perish;" "All the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." In the New Testament we are assured that "he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life," and "he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." Throughout the Scriptures, passages of similar import abound. If separated from their contexts, and taken literally, they would make it difficult if not impossible to avoid the conclusion to which the advocates of the conditional theory have arrived.

Much stress is also laid on the statement, in the Epistle to the Romans, that "the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The gift of God.

Here is a sharp distinction. Death is the punishment of those who continue in sin. Life is given to those who become united to Christ. The fact that this life is said to be a free gift is put forward to prove that man is not naturally immortal. For if by inheritance, or by special endowment, he had received this eternal life at his birth, it would not be given to him when he accepted Christ as a Saviour. He could not properly be said to receive at that time something that he had possessed from the day upon which he was born.

Then, too, immortality is represented under the figure of a prize which God will give to those who are faithful in His service. While it is a gift, it is not to be bestowed

A prize to be won.

unconditionally. It is a treasure to be won, as well as to be received. Christ solemnly urged His hearers to "strive to enter in by the narrow door" that opened to eternal life. He warned them that many would seek to enter who, through want of earnestness or perseverance, would not be able to pass through, and who thus would fail to secure the unending blessedness which God was willing and desirous to bestow. The man who was too indifferent to strive for it would not receive the prize. In the same strain the Apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy, urges him to "lay hold on the life eternal," and charges him to teach others to so live in this world "that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed."

These, and similar passages, are quoted to prove that man

cannot be immortal by nature. If he had possessed this endless life he would not be urged to strive for it, or to lay hold of it, or to make any effort for its attainment. Man cannot acquire what he already has, and neither Christ nor Paul would have urged men to spend their strength in an effort to secure something which was their natural heritage, and of which they had never been deprived.

Another stronghold of the believers in conditional immortality is found in the reference by the Apostle Paul, in the first of his letters to Timothy, to God "who only hath immortality." This is presented as an unanswerable argument against the inherent immortality of man. It is fortified, too, by the statement of the same Apostle, when writing to the believers at Corinth, that in the resurrection of the just, when death itself is destroyed, "this mortal shall have put on immortality." They claim that it requires no special power of discernment to enable one to understand that if only God is immortal, all of His creatures must be mortal. And if man is now, has been from the moment of his birth, and always will be, immortal, there does not seem to be any propriety in saying that he will "put on" immortality at some future time.

A large number of other words and phrases from the Scriptures, which are brought into the service of the conditionalists, might be quoted did the limits of this work allow, but enough have been given to show the general grounds of the belief which they are used to sustain. It does not seem to me that any arguments for this doctrine, either from the Scriptures or from other sources, are conclusive. The passages from the Bible can be explained without resorting to this theory. The general trend of Scripture appears to be against it. Indications from the realm of nature, as has already been shown, lend it but little support. There are, also, some very serious objections to this teaching. Some, at least, of these must be noted. This, however, not for the sake of argument, or in order to oppose those who uphold the doctrine, for I should be glad indeed to agree with them if I could, but because it is impossible to ignore these objections in any honest investigation of the destiny of the human soul.

In many places in the Scriptures the words which denote being, cessation of being, and continued existence, are used in a

very different sense from what they are in other parts of the Bible, or in the ordinary course of communication. *Enlarged meanings of words.* Their force depends very largely upon the connection in which they appear, and the manner in which they are used. Many words have not only their original meanings, but also far larger and fuller significations. At first applied to material things, their meaning was clear but limited. When they were made to stand for spiritual ideas they became much more comprehensive. This fact the advocates of the conditionalist theory seem to have overlooked. "They forget that a new order of thought and faith like Christianity has to fill old words with a new meaning for the expression of new ideas. They forget that the terms must have a sense commensurate with the objects to which they are applied. If they are used of objects whose nature it is to cease to be, they will have the literal sense. But if they are employed of objects whose nature is the opposite, they will have a larger meaning."¹

Here seems to be the key to the problem. As applied to the soul, such words as life, death, destruction, perish, and others of the same general class, have a figurative meaning. *Spiritual death.* The death with which Adam was threatened as the penalty of disobedience may not have meant, and probably did not mean, a total passing out of existence when the body dies. It did not necessarily imply extinction of being. But it did involve a break in the close communion of man with his Maker, which he had previously enjoyed. It caused a separation of the soul from the God with whom it formerly had most intimate relations. This, it is believed, is what constituted the spiritual part of the penalty.

Spiritual life means a great deal more than the mere continuance in being of the soul after death. It means quality as well as quantity of existence. The eternal life which Christ promised to give, and of which Paul urged *Spiritual life.* his readers to lay hold, is a good, as well as a prolonged, existence. And the death regarding which Christ uttered the most solemn and emphatic warnings, and which the prophets and apostles set forth as a most appalling disaster, must have been a great deal more than the falling of the individual into nothingness. The manner and the connections in which the words

¹ S. D. F. Salmond, D. D., *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*.

“life” and “death” were often used show beyond all doubt that they were designed to carry a great deal more than their ordinary meaning.

“Destruction” is one of the words upon which the advocates of the conditional theory place a great deal of reliance. Yet this word, and the same may be said of each of its kindred terms, is used in the Bible in a manner that is entirely at variance with their doctrine. As a single illustration let us take the passage in Hosea, in which God says, “It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help.” Here “destruction” means something very different from annihilation. The same figure is used elsewhere in connections which show that the word has the same limitations. The people destroyed themselves, but God promised to come to their relief, and time after time He brought them out of the ruin into which they had plunged. This proves that the destruction which had come upon them was not absolute. The word was used in a figurative, and not in a literal, sense.

Another word that is largely employed in support of the conditional theory is “perish.” This word appears in many passages in which, if it has the literal meaning, it seems to teach that man may lose his personal existence. But it is certain that this word is used in the Bible in a much more limited sense. When the disciples were afraid of being drowned in the lake, and awoke the Master, saying, “Save, Lord; we perish,” there is no reason to suppose that they had the slightest thought of passing out of existence. What they feared was death, and this they undoubtedly believed to be merely the separation of the soul from the body.

Perhaps there is no word which is used in religious literature concerning the exact meaning of which there has been more controversy than there has been over that of “immortality.” Like many other words this has a narrow, literal meaning, and also one that is a great deal larger and fuller. It is often used to signify freedom from death. In this sense it is equivalent to endless existence, or eternal life, and these terms are often regarded as having precisely the same meaning. When used in this manner they support the claims of those who believe that faith in Christ is an inexorable condition of the immortality of the human soul.

Those who hold that man is naturally immortal claim that eternal life means a great deal more than endless existence. Man does not need to strive for mere existence, for he has it, and it will not, perhaps cannot, be taken *Eternal life.* from him. What the Scriptures urge him to strive for is to make his existence supremely happy. If he accepts Christ as his Saviour he will secure this end. If he does not become united to God through Christ his existence will be continued, but will be unutterably miserable. He will have immortality, but it will not be a blessed immortality. The continued existence is an inheritance of the good and the bad alike. The blessedness of that existence is not inherited, but is the reward of faith and fidelity. Thus there is a very true, though limited, sense in which immortality is to be obtained "by the cross only." For it is not the length of the period through which it is continued, but the quality of the life which determines whether it really is immortal.

The statement, upon which the conditionalists strongly rely, that God "only hath immortality," may be explained by saying that He is the one and only source of existence. *Immortality from God.* He is the only Being who can impart immortality. Created beings can receive it, but they cannot communicate it to others. Thus, though only God may have it independently of any other being, He may have imparted it to man as one of the essential and indestructible qualities of his nature. The fact that it was derived from God does not make it either impossible or improbable that his existence will be continued forever. And when, at the resurrection, the righteous "put on immortality," it is not to be supposed that they extend the period of their natural existence. The addition is one of quality, not of quantity. With restored bodies, and pure souls, their life becomes an endless course of perfect blessedness.

The doctrine of conditional immortality involves a very low view of human nature. One of the ablest advocates of this form of belief asserts that "man has been overrated," and speaks of the "inflated arrogance" of those who *Degrades man.* claim inherent immortality.¹ But the Scriptures affirm that man was made a superior being, and, though he lost much of his nobility by transgression, we are not informed that the image of

¹ E. Petavel, D. D., *The Problem of Immortality*.

God was wholly effaced, and it does not seem possible that his endowment of immortality was forfeited. Man still remains at the head of creation. He still rules the animal and the vegetable world. If the "fitness of things" is any criterion, man will not pass out of existence like the tree or the beast.

Not only this, but it is fair to suppose that God takes into account the capacities of men as well as what they actually accomplish. He sees, as man cannot see, to what heights it is possible for humanity to rise. The savages and the barbarians, as truly as the people in civilized lands whose environment has been such that they could not rise to the intellectual and moral plane which they were designed to occupy, have great possibilities. Many, who to human sight may appear unfit to survive, would doubtless form noble characters if they were placed under favorable conditions. It is not probable that God will allow these capacities for goodness to entirely fail for want of an opportunity for their development. We cannot believe that a being who has a moral nature, freedom of will, and who is conscious of responsibility for his actions, will, like the most insignificant beast, perish at death.

Concerning what immediately follows death, believers in the theory of conditional immortality do not agree much, if any, better than do those who hold that existence is without end. Some think that man is utterly annihilated at death, though they believe that at the resurrection all who have ever lived will come from their graves to the general judgment of mankind. But this would not be a resurrection in any proper sense of the term. It would be an entirely new creation. Personal identity would be lost, and if that is wanting the judgment can have no moral value. Others hold that the body only is destroyed by death, but think that until the resurrection the soul remains in an entirely unconscious condition. This view does not seem to be either reasonable or scriptural. Still another class holds that between death and the resurrection the soul of man maintains its identity and consciousness. There is no cessation of its life when it leaves the body, but merely a change of place and conditions. The evidence is strongly in favor of this opinion. It will be presented in a later section of this work, in which the state of the soul during the period of its separation from the body will be considered.

A very strong objection to the theory of conditional immortality as it is held by those who believe that the life of the soul is maintained between death and the resurrection is found in the fact that, so far as existence is concerned, death is the great crisis of being. If the soul does not perish at death it is fair to suppose that it can pass through any vicissitude to which it may be exposed. The impenitent soul is said to be mortal because it is not united to Christ. It must perish because it has not received the gift of eternal life. But if this were strictly true, we should expect that the soul would pass out of existence with the body. Once admit that it does not perish when the body dies, and it will be necessary to acknowledge that it has within itself the power of continued existence. How great this power may be the unaided reason of man cannot determine. But if the soul survives at all, it seems impossible to place a limit to its existence. We cannot be sure that sin, however deep and dark it may be, will ever blot out a human soul. If we accept the Bible as true we must admit that the fallen angels were not utterly destroyed when they rebelled against God. Their existence has been continued although their open and active revolt has not ceased. From this it is fair to infer that the soul of man may continue to exist, even under the severest displeasure of its Creator.

*More than mortal
if it survives
death.*

The doctrine of conditional immortality makes necessary a wide departure from the view of the redemptive work of Christ, which believers in the theory of inherent immortality hold. According to the latter, Christ came, not to prolong the period of man's existence, but to make that existence fuller, and richer, and nobler than it otherwise could have been. He came into the world not merely to save men from the suffering which sin entails, but also to save them from sin itself. The conditionalist theory makes the mission and work of Christ to include the impartation of an immortal element as well as a remission of the penalty of transgression. If man ever becomes immortal, he does so through the work of Jesus Christ and acceptance of Him as a personal Saviour. This belief reduces the immortality of man to "something appended to his nature after he believes in Christ." It makes man merely an animal, an animal with great possibilities, it is true, but still as liable to perish as the brute. It does not seem reasonable that

*The object of
redemption.*

Christ should have taken upon Himself a nature that had become so degraded as to be subject to utter extinction at death. If, so far as the persistence of life is concerned, man had fallen to the level of the brute, it seems probable that, without regard to character, he would have been allowed to pass out of existence when the body died. This, according to the conditionalist view, would have occurred if Christ had not come into the world. Then there would have been no resurrection, or judgment, or punishment for the wicked. Death would have been the end of all personal, conscious existence.

Many who hold to the general doctrine of conditionalism believe that some souls, which have been extremely wicked, will not go out of existence at the judgment, but will
Punishment. then receive their sentence of destruction and enter upon a period of suffering, the duration of which will be determined by their deserts. But this does not appear to answer the demands of a doctrine which calls for the extinction of being as the penalty of sin. If the blotting out of the personal consciousness is punishment, as it is said to be, there seems to be no justification for the infliction of suffering preceding the execution of the penalty. And if suffering is to be continued as long as existence remains, the extinction of being will not be regarded as an incalculable loss, but will be looked forward to with joyful anticipation as an absolute and eternal relief from pain. Under such conditions annihilation would be a reward instead of a punishment.

The extinction of being does not seem to be an adequate punishment for unrepented sin. Yet many conditionalists hold that it is sufficient, and that there is no other penalty. Under such a law all offenders would be treated alike. The man who failed to gain immortality through ignorance, or through want of earnest effort, would be treated in the same manner as one whose life had been given to vice and crime. Weakness and wickedness would be treated with an equal degree of severity. This does not appear to be just. If extinction of being is not far too severe a deprivation for neglect of duty, it certainly cannot be a sufficient requital for outrageous wickedness. Besides, if punishment is to be endured, there must be consciousness. What occurs to an individual entirely outside of his knowledge and sensibility can have no effect upon him whatever. Suffering is

one of the prime elements of punishment, and when the former ceases forever the latter practically comes to an end.

Much has been said and written upon the question whether God can destroy a human soul. Some have held that, on account of the divine nature of the soul, such an act would be contrary to the principles of His being, *The possibility of annihilation.* and so would be impossible even for God to perform. But it is a reasonable supposition that whatever He has created, be it matter or spirit, He can destroy. It seems safe to assert that nothing which He has brought into being will ever escape from His control. I have no doubt that He can, at the final judgment, or at any other period, in time or eternity, by a direct act of His will, perhaps by simply withdrawing His sustaining power, extinguish the being of any creature He has made. That He will ever do this by the method first named, I do not believe. Whether or not He will allow a soul to go so far from Himself that it will perish for want of His presence, it may not be possible to prove. But there is a great deal in the Scriptures which is strongly opposed to the idea that any human soul will ever pass out of conscious existence.

The doctrine of conditional immortality, as a whole, does not appear to be in accordance with the general course of Scripture teaching concerning the final condition of the human soul. But there is one great truth which forms *A great truth.* an important part of this theory, and which those who range themselves with the conditionalists make very prominent, that ought to receive a great deal more attention than it does from many denominations which reject the doctrine as a whole. This is that the only true life of man comes from the voluntary union of the soul with God. Existence may be prolonged without it, but it is not a good existence. The true, the glorious immortality of the soul comes to man through faith in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIX

IMMORTALITY OF ANIMALS AND PLANTS

No consideration of the subject of the persistence of life could be regarded as either just, or even approximately adequate, which should ignore the question whether there is to be a future existence for animals and plants. Probably the great majority of men who have given the matter careful consideration have decided the inquiry in the negative. Comparatively few who have written upon the subject have thought that a continuance of existence after death was at all probable, and many have denied the possibility of a future life for any objects or beings lower in the scale of creation than man. Some, however, have believed that the higher animals would survive death, and a few have gone so far as to claim that life in most, if not all, of the forms in which it appears upon the earth will be continued elsewhere under more favorable conditions for its development.

In this world there is a very close relationship between man and the animal and vegetable creation. He is, in fact, constantly dependent upon animals and plants for the means of continuing his own life. If deprived of them, the whole race would quickly perish from the earth. Not only is the physical life of man sustained by these lower orders, but they also afford him a great deal of comfort that is not indispensable to a continuance of existence, as well as give him a degree of mental pleasure which cannot be estimated.

Some of the savage tribes manifest a great deal of respect for certain kinds of plants and trees. And this feeling does not disappear as men ascend in the scale of intelligence. It is related of one of the most famous of the Asiatic monarchs of early times, that he took great pleasure in gazing upon an enormous plane-tree. Probably the great majority of thoughtful people, even in this busy age, have a deep feeling of admiration for unusually beautiful or magnificent specimens

of plants, and shrubs, and trees. There is something in these products of the soil that attracts the attention and elevates the thought of the human mind. Many who appear to care but little for them are, almost unconsciously, strongly influenced by their presence. If these people chance to visit a region that is deficient in vegetation, they keenly feel the loss of something which had so silently and unobtrusively ministered to their happiness that they had hardly realized the source from which it came. The sense of loss and desolation, which they cannot shake off, causes them to see more clearly than they have ever seen before, the value of these gifts of God which at once promote the welfare and increase the happiness of man.

So far as his higher nature is concerned, man is brought into far more intimate relations with animals than he is with plants and trees. With animals he can have a kind of *Friendship with animals.* friendship and companionship which, in some degree, is reciprocated, and which gives pleasure and comfort, and sometimes proves an inspiration to better living. Many a child has felt a deep sorrow at the loss of a pet bird or animal. Many a man has, without the slightest regard to his financial interest, sincerely regretted the loss of an intelligent horse or dog, and a still larger number of women have been made unhappy by the death of a pet animal. To not a few who have sustained such losses, the question has often come, whether these objects of care and affection perished when they died.

In common with mankind, plants and animals have a vital principle which is often denominated the soul. The claim has been made that this soul comes from the same *The souls of animals and plants.* source, and is of the same nature, as that of man. And if the meaning of the word "soul" is restricted to vitality, the claim must be admitted. The Scriptures teach that there is, and there can be, no life apart from God. Science, too, whether it accepts or rejects a divine revelation, traces life to a single source. It does not matter, so far as this point is concerned, whether the various forms of life were developed from one original creation, or whether there were, at long intervals, repeated impartations of the creative energy which sufficiently reinforced the natural process of development to make the work complete. The method of its appearance may be accounted for in either way, but the source of the life of plants and animals

must be found in a power infinitely superior to that which inheres in nature, or is possessed by man. That source is God, the Maker of the universe, and of all that is therein.

The fact that the life of the plant came from the same source as that of the animal does not prove that plants and animals are of equal importance. There are many wonderful things in the life of plants. The evidences of wisdom which are shown in their forms, their distribution, their adaptation to the conditions of soil and climate, their means of propagation, and the relations of the different species and varieties to each other, and to other forms of life, are such as to convince the thoughtful and unprejudiced mind that they did not come by chance, and did not produce themselves.

All this, however, does not prove that plants, even of the highest class, have the power of existence after death. A new plant may spring from the roots of one that has decayed, and thus appear to replace the one from which it was derived. Then the plant seems to have a kind of perpetuity which, so far as outward appearances indicate, man does not possess. The Patriarch Job felt the force of this comparison when, in his meditation upon the brevity of human life, and the indications that death will close the term of existence, he exclaimed : —

“ For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.
Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
And the stock thereof die in the ground ;
Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
And put forth boughs like a plant.
But man dieth, and wasteth away :
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? ”

The indications that the life principle of the tree is more enduring than that of man is superficial, and the faith of the patriarch in the immortality of the human soul, which at times seemed to waver, increased in clearness and strength. So far as individuality is concerned, the tree itself perishes at death. The tree that springs from the roots is not the same tree as the one which decayed. The original tree has passed out of existence.

There are those who claim that because all life is from a divine source, it must, without regard to form or quality, be immortal, but the arguments which they employ are weak, and the evidences which they present are few. The probabilities are

overwhelmingly against them. The tree, the shrub, the plant, and the flower are beautiful and useful, but they are not to abide. In the new home, which man will occupy after death, there may be, and probably will be, a magnificent development of plant life. We can hardly doubt that

“ Sweet fields arrayed in living green ”

will far surpass the most beautiful landscapes upon which the eye of man has ever rested, or of which mortal has ever dreamed. But the beautiful flowers, the luxuriant vegetation, the graceful trees that adorn the hills and the plains, and the majestic monarchs of the forests, will not be survivals of earthly forms but entirely new creations.

In the case of animals there is a marked advance upon plant life. The source of life is the same, it is true, but the capacities and powers of the plant are not to be compared with those of the animal. The latter is far more highly organized; it can move from place to place; it has sensibilities which in the plant are almost wholly wanting; and, what is immeasurably above all these points of superiority, it has intelligence. In some individuals of certain classes this mental power is quite remarkable. Ignorant people, whose minds have never been trained, have often been greatly impressed by the sagacity of animals, and not a few unenlightened ones have made “ birds and four-footed beasts ” objects of worship. The believers in the doctrine of transmigration also reverence them because they hold that the bodies of animals are often inhabited by human souls.

There are many, in all, who think that, on account of the source from which their life was drawn, and the powers which they manifest, the nobler animals at least will survive the event of death. The reason first named can have but little weight. Because God is the source of all life it does not follow that all life will be equally persistent. It is neither necessary nor reasonable to suppose that if He made man immortal He must also have given to the horse and the dog the power of endless existence. There is abundant evidence that He made man for a very different purpose from that for which He created the horse and the dog. Then, too, the life of the lower animals was derived from the same source

Higher organization of animals.

Why some hope there will be a future life for animals.

as was that of the higher classes, and, for all that man can know, is just as dear to one class as it is to the other. If those that belong to one class are to survive death, justice would seem to require that those of the other class should receive the same favor. The weak should be cared for as well as the strong. We claim immortality for man, not because he is at the head of the animal creation, or for his nobility as an animal, but because he is a great deal more than an animal. For, unlike the beast, man was made in the image of God.

The other reason, though to many it will not seem to be conclusive, should be considered more at length. Some of the higher animals possess faculties which make them exceedingly interesting, and in many cases useful to man. There are people who claim that these creatures have the same mental characteristics as mankind. A recent writer asserts that "all animals, in common with ourselves, possess the power of reasoning, although in a less degree. It is by the superiority of our reason over theirs that we maintain our supremacy. False premises often lead to wrong deductions, but their process is still one of pure reason."¹ This broad claim comparatively few people would admit. The great majority of those who are competent to offer an opinion upon the subject would, with the possible exception of a few of the higher classes, limit the intellectual powers of animals to instinct which, though a wonderful possession, is far inferior to reason.

Every observer of animals is aware that they are intelligent. In the higher classes we find creatures which can fully understand expressions of praise or blame, which are industrious, and which in some degree have the power of connected thought and the faculty of memory. In the provision for, and protection of, their young, many animals, both among the wild and the domesticated, show an almost human intelligence. This may be largely instinctive; but numerous reports, which were undoubtedly true, have been published which show that some animals at least possess a good deal of mental power that is quite apart from instinct. There have been many cases in which horses could distinguish Sunday from other days of the week. Some animals have been known to count correctly the number of loads to be drawn in a day, or

*Intelligence of
animals.*

¹ Thomas G. Gentry, *Life and Immortality*.

keep in mind some other incident relating to the work in which they were regularly employed.

In one of his books in which he writes briefly of the prospect of a continued existence for animals, Dr. Nichols tells of a horse that he owned which, every morning, for some weeks, obtained the privilege of standing in the stable twenty or thirty minutes longer than he should have done. This was accomplished by a scheme which showed considerable ingenuity, combined with a deliberate purpose to deceive. It was the custom of the coachman to feed the horse in the morning, go to his own breakfast, and when that was finished return and take the horse out for use on the road. It was necessary at one time to do this at an earlier hour than usual. When the coachman returned to the barn he found that the horse was, apparently, still eating, and he waited for some time for the meal to be finished. This was repeated until it became quite troublesome; and, in order to break the horse of what was supposed to be a habit of eating too slowly, the coachman was directed to put on the harness as soon as he returned to the stable. Upon going into the stall to do this, the coachman found that, although the horse appeared to be eating, there was no food in the manger. Morning after morning the horse had been practicing a trick in order to gain a little time from his working hours.¹

Probably every reader of this work has seen descriptions, and most, if not all, have witnessed examples of intelligence on the part of animals which were both curious and interesting. The cunning which is exhibited by wild animals of the classes which have been hunted by man, and which have consequently become wary, is often remarkable. Sometimes these creatures seem to adapt the means which they employ to the ends which they wish to serve, almost as well as they could be chosen by man himself, and not infrequently such animals circumvent the best laid human plans for their capture or destruction.

It is, however, with domestic animals that the closest approach to the use of reason may be seen. Individuals are to be found among various classes of animals which are a great deal more intelligent than are the vast majority of their kind. When these specially gifted animals are properly trained, they show a sur-

¹ J. R. Nichols, M. D., *Whence, What, Where?*

prising degree of mental power and skill. Horses, dogs, cats, and even pigs have been taught to do things which required a considerable development of intellect to enable them to understand how the processes were to be carried on. Such animals must be able to follow certain trains of thought, and to remember distinctly many and diverse things. Then, too, several classes of animals, as the horse, the ox, and the elephant have not only been taught to work, but in numberless cases they have manifested a great deal of intelligent interest in its performance. Sometimes they seem to understand what is needed to advance the work in which they are engaged, and to use mental powers of almost the same nature as those of man in avoiding obstacles or removing obstructions to its progress.

Another endowment of animals is the power of communicating with each other. This is particularly noticeable in the cases of dogs and of certain kinds of birds, though it is by no means confined to these classes of creatures. It is also possible for some of these animals, by means of various sounds and gestures, to make many of their wants known to man, and they are able to understand much that he says to them. If this power of communication with man, and of understanding his language to some extent, were wanting, the domestication of animals and their training for industrial purposes would be impossible. The fact that they possess this power is a clear indication that one of the objects of their creation was that they might be of service to man.

Affection, too, is a marked trait of the character of many animals. Cases in which horses have become strongly attached to kind masters, and in which they have recognized their former owners after a separation of several years, are numerous. Through the Prophet Isaiah God sharply reproached His ancient people for being less grateful than the common brutes. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." There have been cases innumerable in which brutes have been more kind to men than men have been to their fellows, and more faithful to their owners than their owners have been to God.

The power of communication.

Affection and fidelity.



SPOILS OF THE TEMPLE AT THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM.

Of all the animals the dog is, probably, the most devoted to man. In prosperity and adversity he is equally faithful to his master. The man who has gravitated to the bottom of the social scale finds the fidelity of his dog in marked contrast with the treatment which he receives from most of the men whom he had known in better days. And sometimes it seems as though the man had become more of a brute than the dog, that remained faithful to him through want and suffering, and not infrequently through downright abuse, had ever been. Many other animals also show a marked attachment to those who care for them, and even half savage beasts have been known to remember kindness for many years.

The qualities which have been noted are said, by those who hold that animals as well as men are immortal, to prove that the beast has powers which do not become fully developed in this world. It is claimed that the endow- *Inferences from similarity.* ment of the animal, like that of man, is greater than is needed for the brief life that is passed here, and that its faculties seem to have been given with reference to a wider range of experiences than those of earth. It is said that arguments of this kind are used to sustain the doctrine of the future existence of men, and that these arguments should count just as strongly for the lower orders of creation as they do for the highest one.

It is also claimed that whatever indications of a future life for man are supplied by physiology are equally significant with reference to the brutes. The chemical constituents of the physical frame are the same in each. No element appears in man that is not found in all animals of the great class of mammals to which he belongs. The processes of waste and repair of the body are the same, and the periods which cover the growth, maturity, and decline of the body, though varying in length, are as clearly marked in the one as they are in the other. Like man, too, the beast retains its identity through the changes which, every few years, replace the body with another which is similar in appearance although it is composed of entirely different particles of matter.

While there are various ways in which the animal resembles man, there are many others in which there is a wide *Great differences.* dissimilarity. And the differences are so great as to lead to the conviction that the variation is one of kind, and not

merely one of degree. They are different orders of beings. There is no method of education, and no kind of training, by means of which the noblest animal can be converted into a man. The line of demarcation is too wide to be crossed. No mere animal can become a man, and no man can entirely divest himself of the attributes of humanity.

Differences between men and animals appear very early in life. At birth the human being is far more helpless than the animal. The little child is the most ignorant of creatures, and unless cared for by some one stronger and wiser than itself will surely perish. "The chicken, the kitten, the puppy, and the pig are brighter, more intelligent, and less dependent at birth than the human babe. If we should judge by comparison in the first six months, we should say that the brute is the superior animal."¹ But in a few years all this is changed. The creature that was so feeble at birth has obtained dominion over all the animals that were then so much more vigorous than himself. His advance has been so rapid, and his superiority has become so great, as to give the strongest of reasons for believing that he is of a far higher rank than any of the mere animals with which he shares the earth.

We have seen that animals have the power of communicating with each other, and with man, but this power is very limited. They have nothing that can properly be called a language.

Language. They instinctively use certain signs and signals, but they do not add to the number or increase the efficiency of those with which they have been familiar all their lives. But man, even in his lowest form, has a spoken language. As he rises in the scale of intelligence he adds the use of written characters to his means of communication. He enlarges his vocabulary, and systematizes his phraseology, until his language is made an almost perfect means of expressing his thoughts and feelings. Thus he becomes able to communicate, not only with men who are within sound of his voice, but also with those who are in remote parts of the world. He has so perfected his means of intercourse that one can carry on conversation with another who is hundreds of miles away, and can, with the speed of the lightning, flash his messages under the sea and make known his desires to people who are in distant lands. Such

¹ R. B. Westbrook, D. D., *Man—Whence and Whither?*

power is not only immeasurably greater than is that which is possessed by the animal, but it is of a vastly superior quality. The difference is so great that it forces the conviction that the superiority of man to the beast is marked by the kind as truly as it is by the magnitude of the endowment.

Another vast difference between man and the animal is seen in the means which they use to accomplish their purposes. The beast uses just what has been provided by nature. But man does not stop here. He shows a wonderful *Tools and machines.* power in the construction of tools and machines. The lowest races of men invent various implements with which to secure certain desired ends, and cultivated man has attained marvelous skill in this direction. The work of the animal is remarkable, considering the limited means by which it is accomplished, but it seems insignificant when we turn from it to the products of the great mills and factories which are erected by man, and are filled with ingenious and complicated machinery.

Then, too, man secures dominion over the animals themselves, and impresses them into his service. They cannot resist his will. He also brings the great powers of nature *Natural forces and products.* under his control, and makes them do his bidding. Yet he has never had a monopoly of these forces. Air, and water, and fire, and steam, and electricity have always been as free to the animal as they have to man. The same is true of coal, and iron, and the many other valuable substances which the earth supplies to the intelligent and patient toiler. But the beast is of too low an order of being to either comprehend the value or to be able to utilize these forces and products, which man uses with magnificent results for the promotion of his comfort and the advancement of his enterprises.

In the case of man, one generation passes on to its successor all of its stores of knowledge. Though each individual child is born as helpless as was any of its predecessors, yet *Accumulated knowledge.* he will soon have access to the accumulated wisdom of past ages which will give him the means with which to make still further progress. History records vast advances which have been made by various races of men, but in the lines of mental development, and the power of accomplishing definite purposes, there is no evidence of advance in any class of animals. By selection and breeding man has produced changes which have

made domestic animals more useful to himself, but he has not so enlarged their mental capacity that they can make use of knowledge which was obtained by their predecessors. Each animal begins where every other animal of its class began, and each is obliged to make its own way without reference to what any other one has accomplished.

Animals differ widely from men in the possibilities of progress. In man these appear to be unlimited. The more he learns the greater becomes his anxiety to learn still more. And each new acquisition of knowledge develops and strengthens his intellect, and thus gives him the power to still further increase his mental stores. But nothing of this kind is seen in the animal world. The animals which delight people with the tricks which they perform have all been trained by men. They have been carefully, patiently, and persistently taught to perform their special parts. And, in all such cases, where these parts end the manifestation of an extraordinary degree of intelligence ceases. Man, after a comparatively few lessons, can go on by himself, but the animal can go no farther than the teacher goes with him. And man can be taught, and can teach himself, at any period of his life. He can learn more readily in youth, but he can make great intellectual progress in middle life and even after he reaches a somewhat advanced age. But whatever the animal is to learn must be taught to it while it is young. It is exceedingly difficult, and in many cases it is useless to attempt, to teach it after the period of growth has been passed.

In respect to the degree of perfection of the work that is done, there is a great difference between men and animals. Man is constantly increasing the excellence of his products. In everything that he makes there is an effort to improve. In almost every department of his industry the product is a great deal better than it was a hundred years ago. This is not true of the animal. The bee makes a wonderfully perfect cell, but just as perfect ones were made by bees thousands of years ago. The skill of the beaver in constructing its house is almost marvelous, but it is no greater than that which was exhibited by beavers in the early ages of the world. But since his first rude homes were constructed the habitations of man have been most wonderfully improved. And this improvement has come as the

result of thought, and study, and of costly and oft repeated experiment. Man is still constantly striving to improve the appearance and increase the convenience of his home, but the animal builds just as all animals of its class have been building for thousands of years. The skill of the animal is inherited, and it remains the same from generation to generation. Man adds to, and improves upon, the inheritance that he has received.

In their manner of life, and the way in which they regard their stay upon earth, there is an immense difference between animals and men. The beast is easily satisfied. If it has plenty of food and drink, is not made uncomfortable by heat or cold, and is not disturbed by enemies, its happiness seems to be complete. It does not look back upon the past, and it appears to have no longing for anything beyond the present state of existence. It does not attempt to improve upon its condition. So far as man can judge it has no aspirations for a nobler form of life. It knows nothing of what constitute the higher pleasures of man. Poetry, art, and literature are unknown terms, and music is cared for by comparatively few animals, and by them in only a small degree. And animals have no high aims or noble purposes. They are contented with this life, and, with the exception of a few classes, they seem to answer, here and now, the full intent for which they were created. But man, although he may have fallen to a low state, is never satisfied. Even when his life is a degraded one, he sometimes hears a voice within which tells him that he is not living up to his privileges, that he is not just to himself, or to the God who sent him into the world for a nobler purpose and a higher destiny.

Another great difference between the brute and man is seen in the purposes for which they unite their efforts. Animals often go in bands for defense against a common foe. Sometimes, in herds of domestic animals, one or more will rush to the aid of a member that has been assailed by an unexpected enemy, though more frequently all who can do so will make their escape. But wild animals often turn upon and destroy one of their number that has been badly injured, though this is probably done in order to protect the herd from beasts of prey which might follow it if partially disabled animals were allowed to go with it and retard its progress. In any

Animal life on a low plane.

Associated effort.

case the united effort is for purely protective purposes. It is prompted by selfishness.

Men, also, form many organizations which are solely for the protection of their members against certain evils. But they have a multitude of others which are designed to promote the mental and moral improvement of all who belong to them. Then, too, there are the many associations for the benefit of the public at large, and others which are established for the purpose of giving care and assistance to the sick, the weak, and the unfortunate. These are maintained at an enormous expense of money, labor, and time. They represent a vast amount of effort for the good of others, and in numberless cases the sacrifice is made, and the effort is put forth, for the benefit of total strangers. Of such disinterested association, animals are ignorant.

Another difference between animals and men is seen in their attitude towards death. The instinct of self-preservation is strong in the brute, and causes him to make desperate efforts to escape a deadly foe. But this instinct is aroused only when there is real or supposed danger. At other periods, until that of extreme age, the animal seems to have no thought that life must come to an end. When the weakness which precedes dissolution comes on, animals of certain classes seek a secluded place in which to die. There appears to be neither fear nor anxiety. There are no regrets for the past and no looking forward to either good or ill in the future.

Man, however, has always the knowledge that death stands in his path. At times he may seem to be indifferent, but often the truth that he must die presses upon him with a terrible weight. He endeavors to postpone the issue as long as possible, but he is fully aware that the time will come when no skill or power of man can stay the hand of death. Not only in times of apparent peril, but at all periods, he is conscious that the decree has gone forth, and that, sooner or later, he will be compelled to depart this life. During a large part of his active career he is looking forward to, and in various ways endeavoring to prepare for, the close of his earthly existence.

There is an equally marked difference in the conduct of men and animals when they are in the actual presence of death. Man sadly and solemnly, and often with impressive ceremonies,

buries his dead. He regards the last resting-place of their dust as sacred ground. At the graves of his loved ones he erects permanent memorials, and as long as his own life is spared he cherishes the memory of the departed. But all of this is foreign to the nature of the brute. Unless it be for the purpose of protecting the living from the attacks of flesh-eating enemies, animals do not bury, or attempt to conceal, the bodies of those that die. They never build tombs, or place any distinguishing mark at the place where a dead body rests. And, except in the cases of some individuals of the higher classes, they at once forget those of their kind which have perished. This clearly shows that the difference between men and animals, as regards care for and remembrance of the dead, is not one of the development or want of development of certain faculties, but is due to the fact that one has been endowed with powers which the other does not possess.

Great as are the differences that have been named, the supreme divergence is found in the fact that the animal has no moral or religious nature. We have seen that, in *No moral or religious nature.* common with man, animals have mental powers. The mind of the animal is not nearly as complete in its functions, or as clear and vigorous in its operations, as is that of man. But, as far as it goes, it seems to partake of the same nature as the human mind.

In the moral realm the case is wholly different. The animal knows nothing of responsibility. In the Middle Ages beasts were tried, condemned, and executed for destroying human life. Such proceedings did not attract a great deal of attention, or cause any special criticism, in that dark period of human history, but in these enlightened days they would be justly regarded as idiotic or insane performances. We know that man in his most degraded state has the power of choosing either the right or the wrong. And because he has this power to obey or to disobey the law of the land, society holds him accountable for his acts. The lawbreaker knows, just as well as any one else, that he deserves to be punished for his crimes. But when an animal injures man, or destroys property, the act has no moral quality. The beast is ignorant and irresponsible.

To man, the life that now is presents itself as a period of probation, and he looks forward to something in the nature of an

examination into his conduct, and a judgment that shall bring him a reward for good or a punishment for evil. Of this the animal is entirely ignorant. Its horizon is bounded by the little round of its earthly existence. It has neither fear nor thought of anything that may await it beyond its present state of being.

Probation and judgment.

Then, too, the more specific religious instinct, which in some degree is possessed by the lowest man, is absent in the highest brute. The savage races of mankind have their gods, and barbarous peoples observe rude forms of worship. Here we have, without doubt, "something distinctively human, and not shared in any definite form by even the best developed of the lower animals." The animals do various things which show that they are intelligent, "but never do we see anywhere among them the notion of the Divine."¹

The idea of God.

Not only this, but it is impossible to teach an animal about God. Uncivilized men can grasp religious ideas without special difficulty, but it is as impracticable to teach the most intelligent animal about its Creator as it is to get the idea of worship into a stone. Man was made in the image of God, and to some extent has the power of comprehending His nature and purposes. The beast was created on a lower scale, and with powers which, in number and in quality, are not to be compared to those with which man is endowed.

Some writers have thought that the Scriptures distinctly teach that animals perish at death. Others claim that this view is based upon a mistaken interpretation of the passages upon which such a doctrine is based, and that the real meaning is directly opposed to the one which has been placed upon them. If taken literally, some of the passages which are quoted in behalf of the theory that animals cannot have a future life would be conclusive. Believers in the doctrine of the conditional immortality of the human soul insist that these statements are to be received without qualification. The brutes perish and, therefore, pass out of existence at death. Man, being closely allied to the beast, and having no inherent immortality, must, in the same manner and from the same cause, cease to be. This claim has been considered at some length in the preceding chapter, and the arguments do not need to be

The teaching of Scripture.

¹ D. G. Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples*.

repeated. But it must be remembered that the immortality of man is not dependent upon the continued life of mere animals. Man may survive even though the brute perishes.

Many scholars give to the passages of Scripture which some claim teach the annihilation of unregenerate humanity, and all of the lower animals, an interpretation which indicates that man will certainly survive the event of death. They also assert that there is nothing that is really decisive to be learned in respect to what the termination of the present life will bring to the brute. It has been suggested that the phrase in the forty-ninth Psalm, which, in both the King James and the Revised Version, reads "like the beasts that perish," should be changed to "like the beasts that are irrational." Various other modifications of Scripture statement and explanation have also been made which, while they do not prove that there will be a future existence for animals, tend to break the force of some of the principal objections to this doctrine which were drawn from the Bible.

Another point, and one which does not seem to have had as much attention as it deserved, has reference to the relative value of human and animal life. The Scriptures declare that human life is sacred. To take it intentionally, *Relative value of life.* except as an act of justice, or in the prosecution of some object that has all the urgency of an imperative duty, is a crime for which the only adequate penalty is death. But God gave man permission to slay animals for food, and their slaughter for sacrifice was for thousands of years an important feature of the Jewish religion.

Human laws and customs make a similar distinction between the life of the man and that of the beast. Even in the dense darkness of superstition and idolatry, where the life of man is considered of but little worth, it still has a greater value than the life of an animal. The killing of an animal causes no comment, but if a man is slain his relatives, or members of the tribe to which he belongs, are very likely to avenge the wrong. In civilized lands the life of man is jealously guarded. Unless it is done in self-defense, the defense of others, or while endeavoring to carry out a legal order, the killing of a man who is notoriously wicked, and who is a menace to society and a disgrace to his kind, is regarded as murder, and where the circumstances are such as to justify the taking of life, the man who kills an-

other must answer to a properly constituted court for his deed. When a good citizen is the victim of a murderous assault, or women or children are killed, the crime is, by common consent, regarded as one of the greatest enormity. But, if it is humanely done, no such guilt attaches to the destruction of animal life. The man who owns a beast has a legal right to end its existence. If the animal belongs to another, the man who kills it can be punished for destroying property, just as he can be for damaging buildings or other inanimate objects. It is a matter of finance. Whatever damage is done must be paid for. No such settlement can be made for the destruction of human life. The life of man is too sacred to be regarded as property. No amount of money can compensate for its loss.

Those who hold that animals are immortal are greatly perplexed by the question whether all animals are to have a continued existence, or whether this privilege will be restricted to the higher classes, and perhaps among these be limited to the nobler specimens. The man who pleads that the beast should have a future life because it is possessed of an immaterial principle which enables him to think and act, and thus allies him with man, makes a claim that includes ferocious beasts, venomous serpents, and annoying insects, as truly as it does the docile and harmless classes of animals. Upon this basis the lion is as fully entitled to immortality as is the horse, and the hyena has as good a claim as the dog. But so far as man is concerned, the future existence of vicious and noxious animals can hardly be considered desirable. It appears as though his happiness would be better promoted by their extinction than it could be by their preservation.

The suggestion has been made that instead of the possession of intellect the quality of usefulness, or the capacity for advancement, should be the test of an existence after death. This appears to be a much more reasonable basis than the other for the doctrine of the immortality of animals, though it is very far from proving that merely animal life can continue after the organism in which it was manifested has perished. It is possible, too, that eventually there will be a change in the nature of animals which will make all classes either useful or pleasing to man. There may be a literal fulfillment of the prophecy that "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and

The line of demarcation.

Usefulness as a test of survival.

the lion shall eat straw like the ox: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Perhaps when the evils of sin shall be rooted out, and the original relations of man with the natural world shall be restored, the beasts of prey will become harmless, and the warfare which they have waged against animals and men with such persistence and malignity will forever come to an end.

That here and now animals are necessary to the comfort of man, and that they add greatly to his pleasure as well as increase his material prosperity, is plain to every one. How *Desirable in a higher life.* it will be in the higher life which it is believed that the good will enjoy after they have been called away from earth is, necessarily, a matter of conjecture. It seems, however, that if man is to retain his personality, the presence of animals of the classes with which he has had kindly relations on earth would add greatly to his pleasure in his new home. And we have reason to believe that the Father who has been so beneficent to His children while they were here will not allow them to want for anything that is necessary to their comfort there. It is possible, however, and the evidence seems to be to the effect that it is probable, that the animals which are to minister to man in his future life will be new creations, rather than the identical ones which have lived and died on the earth.

Some of the Oriental philosophers taught that when plants and animals die their life principle does not perish, but takes on a higher form. Thus it may persist through various *The law of advancement.* crises, and continue to increase in power and improve in quality for an unlimited period. Some modern thinkers have given a qualified assent to this doctrine. It may be true that this life is but the beginning of an ascending scale of being. The law of God is a law of advancement, and it is possible that this law reaches farther and deeper than it has been supposed to apply. There may be great surprises for us along this line. In the world to come we may find not only that animals have survived, but that there has been as great an improvement in their life, and in the conditions under which that life is to be passed, as there has been in the case of man. It seems more reasonable to suppose that such will be the case than it is to expect that animals will pass from this world to the next

without any decided improvement in their rank and increase of their endowments.

Every day there is an incalculable amount of suffering in the animal world. And a large part of this suffering comes upon creatures that are harmless and inoffensive. A great deal, too, is inflicted by careless or cruel men upon the domestic animals which, for some inexplicable reason, have been given into their power. Why this should be permitted, or why suffering should come to any creatures that are destitute of moral perceptions, is a dark problem.

The problem of suffering.

Much of the suffering of man is due to the violation of laws which are either known or can be ascertained. Then, too, in the case of man, pain may be a means of great spiritual improvement, both to the sufferer and to those who are connected with him. This does not, by any means, offer an adequate explanation of human misery, but it does give a little light upon one of the darkest phases of human experience.

In the case of the brute creation we cannot fall back even upon this meagre explanation. We know that terrible suffering exists. We do not know why. Much of it comes in the struggle for existence. It is true that the survival of the strongest is a benefit to the classes of animals, and in many cases incidentally to man. But this leaves us as much in the dark as ever. We cannot see why this improvement of the species should involve so much suffering to the weaker individuals. We do see that progress is purchased at an enormous cost, and that multitudes of the creatures which appear to be in need of protection are ruthlessly destroyed.

There are scriptural reasons for supposing that in some way this suffering of animals is connected with the sin of man, and that when the higher race comes into full harmony with God the suffering of the lower creation will cease. Doubtless this thought was in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he wrote that "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until

Connection with the sin of man.

now." Here we have a plain indication that the perfection of man will be an inestimable blessing to every living creature and thing, and that even the inanimate world will share in the glory that shall then be revealed. Still, we do not find an answer to the question why animals are compelled to suffer now. Why they should suffer for the sin of man we cannot comprehend. Upon this great fact of the apparently undeserved and unrecompensed suffering, not a few very intelligent people base a belief that animals will have another and a better life.

A lesson which reason and revelation unite in teaching is that animals, though greatly inferior to man, are, in common with him, the creatures of God. Because of this relationship and the connection of their suffering with the sin of man, all which are not pernicious should be treated kindly. For the welfare of those that are committed to his care man is responsible, and for any injury that is done them unnecessarily an account will surely be required. Whether or not he meets them in another state of being, he will be obliged to answer for any unjust treatment of them of which he has been guilty here.

Our duty to animals.

The services which domestic animals cheerfully render should lead their owners to endeavor, in all reasonable ways, to promote their comfort. It is true that, while many are negligent or abusive, many other persons are kind to the animals that render them service or give them pleasure. Occasionally, too, an effort is made to perpetuate the memory of those that have died. A remarkable illustration of such an effort has been furnished by the Japanese, who have publicly recognized the value of the services of horses in the late war with China by erecting a monument in honor of those that were slain. It would be well for all the nations, Christian as well as those which have not come under the influence of a pure religion, if the kindly sentiment and generous spirit which prompted this public tribute to noble and useful animals were diffused throughout the world.

When we seek a decisive answer to the question whether the animals which have been our pets or our servants here perish at death, we find that our search is in vain. However earnest and persistent our efforts may be, they are always baffled. With but slight qualification we can adopt the conclusion of a careful student, that "the inquiry as

The question of a future existence unanswered.

to the continuance of animal life after death is overshadowed by a cloud so profoundly dark one cannot take a single step over the border line into this field of research." ¹

Nature does not furnish adequate proof that a mere animal can survive the event of death. Neither does she fully demonstrate that its existence ends in this world. The same may be said of revelation. The Bible does not seem to offer much support to the assertion that animals will have a future life, though I am not sure that such an existence is expressly denied.

The general tenor of what can be learned from all available sources of information is not favorable to the doctrine that the existence of animals will be continued after death. The probabilities are that such life will cease in this world. Yet it is neither wise nor safe to assert that this will be the case. Perhaps in the new home of man there will be a place for our animal friends. We cannot tell until we cross the line which separates the seen from the unseen. For some good reason the knowledge we desire has neither been imparted to us nor placed within our reach. But we may be sure that the loving care of God is over all of His works, that His purposes are wise and beneficent, and that whether our hopes regarding the future of the animals to which we have become attached are fulfilled or disappointed, His goodness will not fail. And if we do not in this respect obtain just what we choose, we need not doubt that in its place we shall receive a higher blessing than the one which we desired.

¹ Dr. J. R. Nichols, *Whence, What, Where?*

PART V

THE LIFE BEYOND

CHAPTER XX

BEHIND THE VEIL

It is thought that sufficient evidence has been presented to warrant a belief that the soul does not perish at death. Man was made for higher ends than he can attain, and nobler purposes than he can fulfill, in this world. *If life continues.*

He leaves here with mighty powers and vast capacities which he has had but little time to cultivate, and but slight opportunity to employ. His real development has but little more than commenced when he is called away by death.

It is not reasonable to suppose that the God who made man as the crowning work of His marvelous creation will allow him to perish before he has more than crossed the threshold of a useful existence. As far as we can judge by appearances, we are justified in saying that even the wisest and best of men have only made a mere beginning of the vast work which they are competent to do, when they are removed by death. We cannot believe that God would be so regardless of the immense possibilities of man as to limit this development, and the exercise of his great moral and spiritual powers, to the brief period which he is allowed to spend in the present world. These, and other arguments which have been stated in the preceding pages, are so fully sustained by revelation as to make it far more reasonable to believe that the human soul will live after death than it is to doubt the reality of a future life.

No argument will be needed to prove that if the individual survives the great event of death he will enter at once upon widely different conditions from those *A great change.* under which he has lived in this world. The body, which thus

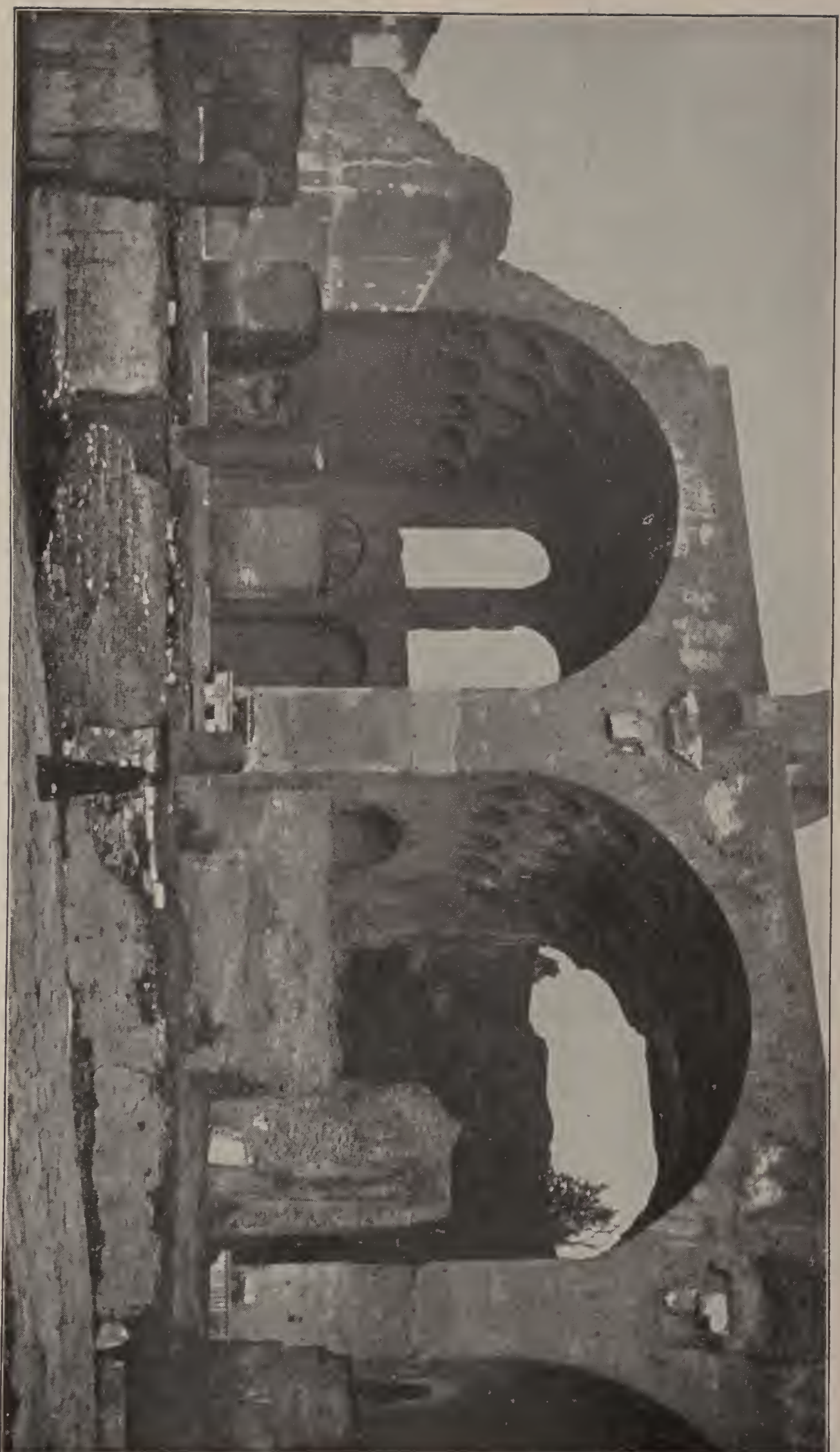
far has been the medium of communication with what was outside of his own mind, is wholly laid aside. So far as the senses are concerned, the dead have vanished. The places in which they lived and moved will know them no more. If they ever return it will be in silence, and with no outward manifestation of their presence.

So far as our physical senses can indicate, the dead are as truly separated from the living as though they had been annihilated. The body disappears, and with it, indeed, before the disintegration of the physical organism begins, all that gave vigor and life to the physical frame has vanished. The intellectual and spiritual elements, which made the real person whom we knew, have either been destroyed by death, have entered a long period of unconsciousness, or are now in a state of existence of which the character and surroundings are of an altogether different nature from those with which he was familiar here.

It is natural that we should desire to learn what awaits the soul upon its separation from the body. Our hearts often prompt us to make the inquiry. Many of our loved ones *Concerning our friends.* have given us their last farewells on earth and have gone out into the unseen and the unknown. Where are they now? How does it fare with them? Shall we ever see them again? These are questions which are prompted by a love that is, perhaps, even stronger than that which we had for our dear ones while we were together upon the earth. They are inquiries which cannot be kept from our minds. It is not idle curiosity which prompts us to study the condition of departed souls. It is a duty to remember our dead. It is both a duty and a privilege to learn what we can concerning their present place and state.

Not only do we feel a deep anxiety regarding others, but we have an intense interest in this subject as it affects ourselves.

As regards ourselves. Each of us, without a single exception, is on the way to the state and place of the dead. How it will fare with us when we enter what we now call the unseen realm is a matter of infinite concern. With few, if any, exceptions, all men feel this at times, though many do not wish to have it known that they are anxious about the hereafter. Then, too, there are many who, while admitting the supreme importance of the subject, assert that we do not know, and from the nature of the case



RUINS OF THE BASILICA OF CONSTANTINE, ROME. "THE TEMPLE OF PEACE."

cannot know, anything definite about the future life until the soul leaves the body. Therefore they do not make any careful and systematic effort to find whether their conclusion is correct. They hope to be able to meet death with some degree of composure, but this hope has no basis of knowledge upon which to rest. Great questions which should be considered and settled in the days of health, when the body is strong and the mind is clear, are left, to a great extent, unconsidered and wholly undecided.

The condition of the soul immediately after death was a common subject of thought and discussion in the early days of the Christian faith. But after a time it was very largely *Renewed interest.* allowed to give place to other matters, and until a comparatively recent period it has seemed to be neglected by nearly all branches of the Protestant church. The attention of preachers, teachers, and writers upon religious subjects appears to have been concentrated upon this life as one extreme, and the Resurrection and Judgment as the other, thus leaving a vast intermediate period almost wholly out of view. Of late, however, there has been a decided change in this respect. The desire is now quite general to investigate the conditions under which, if its conscious life is continued, the soul is placed when it leaves the world.

This change in sentiment is a good indication. The character of the existence which follows death is worthy of the most earnest study and the most patient and careful con- *Right to seek information.* sideration. It is far from wise to assume an attitude of indifference to that part of our existence which, beginning at death, stretches away into the limitless future. We do not treat important earthly matters in this manner, although we are sure that, at the longest, they can, in their present relationships, interest us but a little while. On the contrary, we give such subjects our closest attention, and cheerfully spend time and money in making all necessary investigations.

Before we commence a trip to a foreign country, or to a distant city in our own land, we make an effort to obtain information regarding the place which we desire to visit. We are not content to wait until we reach the place of our destination before we attempt to learn something regarding the conditions of life at that point. Even if we are to stay only a few weeks,

we do not want to remain in entire ignorance of the locality until our arrival there. We read what we can about it; we search the map to find its exact position; and we give careful attention to all of the details concerning it which we can obtain. This is both natural and sensible. It is something that wisdom demands of us. Upon the making of such investigations the pleasure and profit which we shall derive from our journey will very largely depend. Yet, desirable as all of this is, it is nothing when compared with the importance of obtaining all possible information regarding the character of the world to which we are surely going when death removes us from these earthly scenes.

The Scriptures, as well as reason, urge us to make an earnest and reverent study of the conditions of the future life. They are constantly placing before the minds of men the duty of making a careful preparation for life in the world that is to be entered at death. They insist that the things that are real and valuable and enduring lie beyond the boundaries of the present existence. They lay great stress upon the faithful performance of duty here and now, but they always subordinate the present to the future. They teach that the home of the soul is not here, that this life is but the merest fraction of existence, and that it is only when this primary stage has been passed that we can enter upon a state in which there will be an opportunity to develop fully our nobler powers.

While we do not agree with those who claim that nothing can be learned regarding a future state, we are free to admit that the sources of knowledge are neither as numerous nor as full as could be desired. But from this it does not follow that we must remain in entire ignorance. When subjects relating to this world demand investigation we make use of all the means of information that are within our reach. If the materials are scanty we use the greater degree of diligence to make them as useful as possible. The same course is both legitimate and morally imperative when the matter is one in which the eternal interests of the human soul are involved.

In pursuing an inquiry concerning the place and state of the souls of the dead, we find the conditions very different from those which govern investigations which have to do with matters

of the material world. If we wish to know about any earthly country that has been explored, but which we have never visited, we converse with people who have been there, or read what has been written by those who have given it a somewhat extended description. In this way we are able to get a very fair idea about the region itself and the general conditions of life which prevail within its borders. In some cases the descriptions which we read are so vivid that the places themselves seem to be directly under our observation. But this method of obtaining information cannot apply to the spiritual realm with anything approaching the degree of fullness that it does in respect to the countries of the globe upon which we live.

No extended information from the departed.

In the material world men visit foreign countries and return. They tell us of what they have seen and heard. But when men die they pass out of our sight. They do not come back. Efforts to establish communication with them are very largely, perhaps wholly, in vain. To the great mass of men and women the dead, no matter how dearly they were loved while upon earth, or how tenderly their memories may have been cherished since they were called away, never reveal themselves at all. Whether such a revelation would be possible if the living were less engrossed with material affairs, and lived on a much higher spiritual plane than they now occupy, is a question which will be considered in succeeding pages. At present we have to do with what actually is the case, and not with what might be true if the conditions were changed. The departed may be as deeply interested in us as we are in them; but they cannot come to us, and we cannot go to them, as it was possible to do before they died. Therefore, until the barriers by which they are separated from us can be surmounted, we cannot expect to receive any detailed information from them regarding the life of the soul after its separation from the physical frame.

It is not to be supposed that reason alone can speak the decisive word regarding the condition of the soul after death. It is an imperfect guide at the best. This may be seen in the fact that from the same series of observations men of great intellectual power, and who are honest seekers of the truth, reach widely different conclusions. Whether any of them are right or not, some of them must be

The light of reason.

wrong. The differences are altogether too great to be reconciled. Now if this is true where we have a considerable amount of knowledge as a basis for our deductions, it must follow that in a field in which information is very limited reason alone will be far from sufficient to determine absolutely what is to be believed. Nevertheless, it is our right and our duty to use it as far as it can be made available. To fail to use this faculty when we are confronted with the great problems of the future life would neither honor the God who gave it nor be just to ourselves.

It has been asserted by some, and taken for granted by many, that the Scriptures have very little to say concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection. As compared with what they tell us regarding many other matters, the assertion is true. But this objection to an examination of the conditions which govern the future life has an equal degree of force concerning some of the doctrines which many denominations of Christians make very prominent in their articles of belief. Yet, though the direct teachings of the Scriptures regarding them are meagre, these doctrines are not excluded from confessions of faith, from catechisms, or from the more general statements of theological systems. The same degree of latitude should be allowed in the treatment of other subjects concerning which comparatively little has been revealed. It is just as reasonable that we should use the declarations and implications of the Word of God in the establishment of a theory of the future life of the soul as it is that we should endeavor to formulate doctrines upon other subjects which are not of greater importance and regarding which our information is equally incomplete.

It is doubtless true that if they were to make a careful investigation, the great majority, even of truly Christian people, would find that the Bible really furnishes much more information regarding departed souls than they now suppose has been given. They would find, in addition to the direct references, various allusions and indications which they have never connected with this subject but which were evidently intended, in part at least, for its illumination. The promise, "Seek and ye shall find," may reasonably be supposed to apply to the search for truth upon this point as well as upon others. It is certain that some-

thing regarding the future state has been learned by a study of the Bible, and there is no probability that the stores of information which this wonderful volume contains have been exhausted. Further study, combined with the indications presented by other sources of knowledge, will be sure to give additional light. "It is not until the mind has been quickened by an intelligent curiosity, and has obtained also more than one clue to inquiry by the aid of hypothesis, that the actual extent to which the unseen world is open to us in the Scriptures comes to be suspected or understood."¹

It is evident that we cannot obtain, from the combined sources of information to which we have access, definite answers to all of the questions which our hearts prompt us to ask regarding the state of our friends who have entered the world that is unseen by mortal eyes, or concerning what will befall ourselves when we, too, pass behind the veil. But a reverent study of the subject will certainly give us more light than we have yet received. There are things that we can learn as truly as there are mysteries which we cannot fathom. And the knowledge which we obtain may not only be the means of cheering us in the hours of sorrow, and of comforting us as we think of our departed friends, but it may also strengthen our faith in God and our hope of a life that is immeasurably better than that which we live in this present world.

¹ Isaac Taylor, *Physical Theory of Another Life*.

*Limited knowledge
may be useful.*

CHAPTER XXI

AN INTERMEDIATE REALM

WHEN the souls of those who are dear to us pass behind the veil, the question whether, through the agency of the great change called death, they have entered upon their final state of existence cannot be kept from our minds. *An interesting question.* We are anxious to know whether they have passed over the whole course of the journey of the soul, or if only a single stage has been traversed and they are still far from the end. Other questions naturally follow. We ask if the warfare of these souls with sin is accomplished, and their destiny is irrevocably sealed, or if there still remains a possibility of change for better or for worse. We wonder where and how the departed live, what are the subjects of their thought and interest, and what is the nature of their employments if the state in which they dwell is one which admits of active effort. Many other questions, some of them growing out of the ones which have been noted, and several which are closely connected with them, also call for consideration. In the present chapter inquiry will principally have to do with the permanence of the state upon which souls enter at death. Except as incidental reference may be necessary, the other questions will be reserved for treatment at a later stage of this work.

Perhaps there is no question in the whole range of theological discussion upon which there has been a wider difference of opinion, or regarding which the divergent views *Difference of opinion.* have been stated with a greater degree of positive assertion, than has been the case with the theory of an intermediate place, or state, for the dead. For a long period preceding the Christian era various peoples held the belief that death did not bring man to the final stage of his conscious existence. There was, in the minds of many, a vague idea that the soul would be obliged to face another crisis before the last state of its life was reached. With the establishment of the Christian

church this thought became much clearer. The general judgment, which Christ foretold, was believed to mark the close of a period which was intermediate between this life and the final place and state of the soul.

Concerning the state of the soul during the interval which must elapse between its entrance into the unseen world and its summons to appear, with all the millions that have ever lived in this world, before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive, in the presence of the assembled universe, a public certification of its character and destiny, the Scriptures have but little to say. In its statements and implications it gives an occasional glimpse behind the veil. But the veil is never removed, nor is it sufficiently raised to give us anything approaching the degree of light which we would be glad to receive. Now and then a point becomes luminous, but nothing in the way of a clear and connected view is offered to our sight.

In the teachings of Christ, as they are recorded in the New Testament, this reticence is strongly marked. Some go so far as to claim that the only utterance of the Master which is applicable to this state was the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and that this was not designed to give men any particulars regarding the state of the departed, but merely to show that in the next world the reaping will be in exact correspondence with what the sowing has been here. Many eminent scholars hold, with a recent writer, that "Christ Himself gives no doctrine of an intermediate state."¹ But, as will be noted later, from this view there is considerable reason to dissent.

This reticence does not prove either that there is no Intermediate State of the soul, or that, if it exists, nothing can be learned about its condition. There are certain doctrines which are held by large branches of the Christian church which are not made clear by a superficial examination of the Word of God. In order to demonstrate their truth it is necessary to follow the command of Christ to "search the Scriptures." The full meaning of these writings does not always lie upon the surface. Careful study will reveal a great deal that would never be noticed in a casual reading. By following hints and indications, and comparing Scripture with Scripture, we are often able to learn much that is of interest and

¹ S. D. F. Salmond, D. D., *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*.

value which a mere reading of the Word never would have revealed. Therefore, while this Book is to be the supreme test of truth, it is not wise to condemn a doctrine which commends itself to reason and to Christian sentiment merely because it is not fully and decisively presented in the Bible. It is possible that careful and prayerful study will show that it really has a scriptural foundation.

Various reasons for the reticence of Christ and the New Testament writers have been suggested. One of these is that it seemed desirable to emphasize as fully as possible the great fact that this life is the time of preparation for what lies beyond its close. Throughout the whole course of the teaching and the writing it was insisted that if this life is lived according to the will of God there need be no fear of the life to come; while, on the other hand, if the present life is wrong, and its opportunities are neglected, the evil results which will be inevitable will pass on into the succeeding ages. It was designed to make so clear that no one could mistake it the great fact that the vital issues of human life are here and now.

Another reason why no more light is given us regarding the state between death and the judgment is to be found in the strong probability that a full revelation of the condition of the soul during this period would unfit us for the duties and responsibilities of every-day life. Instead of giving our time and effort to making a suitable preparation for the new home, we should often neglect present duty in contemplation of what the future is to bring. Thus the knowledge which we so much desire might be a decided hindrance in the work of preparation for life in a better world.

One more reason which should be mentioned is the fact that Christ and the Apostles regarded the judgment as the great consummation of all the plans and purposes relating to life in the present world. The condition of the soul in the period between the end of this life and the close of the present dispensation was considered of less importance to the individual than was his period of probation, or the public announcement of the result of the test to which he had been subjected. Consequently there was much greater stress laid upon these points than there was upon the interval by which the life here and the final state are separated.

The difficulty in understanding the teaching of the New Testament regarding the intermediate state of the dead is not wholly due to the fact that comparatively little is said upon the subject. A great deal of it, more in ^{A greater difficulty.} fact than is due to the meagreness of the information, comes from the difficulty which invests the interpretation of what has been revealed. There is a great deal of obscurity regarding the period of the life of the soul to which certain passages in the New Testament refer. Texts which some students are sure relate to a certain term of the after-life are, with an equal degree of confidence, referred by others to an altogether different stage. On account of this difference of opinion as to the particular time to which these passages relate, writers who are equally honest and earnest in their search for the truth, and who use the same texts as the basis of their arguments, reach conclusions which cannot possibly be harmonized. The divergence is so great that if any one of the interpretations is right some of the others must be wrong.

Then, too, as an eminent theological writer has observed, a great deal of confusion has been caused by the failure on the part of some to recognize "the difference between ^{Knowledge and conjecture.} what we, from Scripture, actually know of these things, and what we only with some probability can conjecture."¹ To what the Scriptures definitely assert and indirectly give us good ground to believe, there has sometimes been added a great deal of speculation which, whether true or false, was not within the realm of certainty.

Except where the teaching was plainly unscriptural, this elaboration might not have been an evil if the writers had told us just where the line would fall between what they regarded as truth and what was put forth as mere personal opinion. As long as a sharp distinction is made between what is asserted as truth and what we believe may be true, we have a right to allow the imagination to deal very freely with such a subject as the future home of the soul. Just as we try to think how a city that we are soon to visit will appear, and how a friend whom we have not seen for a long time will look when we meet him again, so we have a right to think of the probable appearance of the home of the departed and of the conditions of life therein.

¹ Bishop L. N. Dahle, *Life after Death*.

This is reasonable, not only because many of our dear ones have entered the unseen realm, but also because we too shall ere long cross the line which separates it from the material world. But while a free use of the imagination is legitimate, all mere guesses upon the subject should be clearly separated in our minds from what we have reason to believe rests upon a solid basis of fact.

That there is an intermediate state of some kind seems to be clearly revealed. The Scriptures recognize three great stages in human existence. These are the life upon earth; *Certainty of such a state.* the period between death and the resurrection, an event which is to be so immediately followed by the judgment as practically to make the two contemporaneous; and the great future which projects its endless course beyond the day of doom. As in the second of these periods the soul will necessarily be in a very different condition from what it was while it was connected with its physical frame in its life in this world, and from what it will be when it is united with its perfected body at the resurrection, there can be no impropriety in saying that during this stage it remains in an intermediate state. This period is a clearly marked division in the progressive life and development of the soul.

Regarding the certainty of an intermediate state of some kind there is substantial agreement among nearly all Christian people. It is plain that the departed are in a very different state from what they were while they lived here. It is equally apparent that the resurrection and judgment will bring another great change in their condition. Consequently they have not yet entered upon their final state. The fact that the absolutely complete and permanent state of the soul is not entered upon at death is too plain to admit of any real dispute.

The wide difference of opinion regarding the intermediate state, to which disagreement reference has been made, does not particularly concern the fact that there is such a state, but centres around the condition and possibilities of the soul during the continuance of this period. Some hold that the soul remains in a wholly unconscious condition from the very moment of death until the dead are called from their graves on the resurrection day. Others believe that the state is one of suspense, that the soul is thrown upon its own resources and merely waits, in silence and quietness, for the time

The cause of disagreement.

when it shall rejoin its body and its destiny shall be publicly announced. Still others believe that this state is a great period of education and development of the soul.

The doctrine of an intermediate state of the soul was held by a large number of the early Christians, and in the works of many of the Church Fathers it appears as a standard article of belief. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, *In the early church.* Athanasius, Tertullian, Lactantius, Ambrose, and Augustine, as well as others of great prominence in the early church, might be quoted at length in favor of this doctrine. Justin Martyr went so far as to assert that those who reject it and say that at death the souls of believers pass into heaven "are not to be accounted either Christians or Jews." Those who favor the doctrine claim that, though it had long been current among the Greeks and many of the Jews, it was clearly recognized and approved by Christ and by His disciples.

It is probable that if it had remained in its primitive simplicity, the doctrine of an intermediate state of the soul would have received but little unfriendly criticism. But *Why the doctrine fell into disrepute.* when the doctrine of purgatory was attached to it, and proclamation was made that the souls of many of the servants of God who had departed this life with sins upon them for which full atonement had not been made were being purified by great suffering, and that the duration of their torment could be shortened, and the intensity of their pain could be lessened, by the prayers of men and women upon the earth, by masses, and by the intercession of saints, the whole doctrine of the intermediate state fell into disrepute among large numbers of Christian people. It is not strange that this was the case. Yet it is possible that in the rejection of what must be regarded as a great error, some of our large and influential Protestant denominations of the present time are also losing something of the truth. In sweeping away an unscriptural conception of the intermediate state of the soul they may have carried with it some ideas which are not only not opposed to the Bible teaching but which find a good deal of support therein.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PERSISTENCE OF CONSCIOUS LIFE

FROM what we have learned of the powers and capacities of the human soul we are confident that it will survive the great event of death. Reason and revelation assure us that the soul does not forever pass out of existence when it leaves the body. We feel assured that some time, perhaps in the distant future, there will be an inquiry as to its deserts and a just determination of its destiny. When this occurs the soul will be alive and in the full possession of all of its powers.

The knowledge that death does not involve the eternal destruction of the soul brings no small degree of comfort to those who mourn for friends who have been called away or who look forward to the time when they, too, will depart this life. Still, it falls very far short of what we earnestly desire to learn. As we stand by the dead body of a relative or a friend we instinctively ask ourselves if the soul that has left its earthly tenement has also passed out of conscious existence. It is not enough for us to believe with Martha, as she mourned the death of her brother, that "in the resurrection at the last day" the departed one will live again. We desire to know the condition of the soul at the present moment. We ask ourselves if it has passed into a dreamless sleep in which it will remain until the unnumbered hosts of the dead are called forth from their graves, or whether it is now in conscious existence, with faculties as alert and sensibilities as keen as they were before death occurred. We know that to some extent death has been destructive. We can see that the means which were used for communication while the soul remained in the body are utterly ruined. The body, as such, has ceased to exist. But all this does not make it certain that the powers of the soul have been impaired. It is possible that they are even more vigorous than they were while the union of body and soul was maintained.

As would naturally be expected, there is a wide difference in belief regarding the condition of the human soul in the period which immediately follows its departure from the body. Indeed, the views which are entertained re- *Various theories.* garding the nature and ultimate destiny of the soul are so conflicting that uniformity of opinion upon this point is utterly impossible. This, however, should not discourage inquiry. An examination of theories which have been accepted by careful investigators cannot fail to be interesting, and it is fair to suppose that it will also be instructive.

There are many people, in all, who believe that when an individual dies his whole being perishes. According to their theory the soul is as utterly destroyed as is the body. The *Utter destruction.* ruin is complete and no remedy is possible. As has been shown in a previous chapter this view must be regarded as erroneous. The evidences that the soul does not perish at death are too strong to be resisted. They assure us that though the conditions are greatly changed the real life goes on.

The theory that both soul and body really die when life departs from the physical frame, but that both will be revived by the power of God at the resurrection, has also *Restoration of life.* been noted, and what seem to be convincing objections have been stated. This method would require a new creation instead of an awakening to a renewed life of a soul that had never passed out of existence. In the case of each and every soul a miracle would be required to preserve the identity of the individual. Such a course would be a wide departure from the manner in which the affairs of the universe which come under our observation are conducted.

A less objectionable view, yet one for which we have not been able to find convincing evidence, is that which regards the soul as falling into a profound sleep at the moment of *The soul asleep.* death and remaining absolutely unconscious until the resurrection. During all this period the soul exists, but its consciousness is annihilated. When it awakes it will have no knowledge of the interval that has elapsed since it left the body. It commences an entirely new life, but it is obliged to begin at the point at which the break in continuity occurred ages before.

For many people this theory has a strong fascination. During the periods of childhood and youth they were far from happy.

In later years the burdens of life have been numerous and heavy. The larger part of their active existence has been marked by conflict and clouded by disappointment. Such people can look forward with joy to a period which they believe will be free from these disturbing conditions. They can hardly imagine this period as too long or the rest as too profound. This life has been so constantly attended by weariness, anxiety, and care, that the thought of sinking into utter forgetfulness and remaining undisturbed for ages is cheering almost beyond the power of words to express.

The desire of some.

There are many other persons who take a directly opposite view of this condition of the soul after death. This may be due in part to happier experiences here which have made conscious existence a pleasure instead of a weariness; but it is largely the result of a difference in the mental constitution. In some cases, too, the difference in opinion may be due to the fact that those who shrink from this total loss of consciousness have been more thorough investigators of the powers of the real man than have those who so earnestly desire an undisturbed repose of the soul as well as of the body.

The fear of others.

It is probable that a large proportion of the people who are pleased with the idea of having an unbroken period of repose from the moment of death until the morning of the resurrection do not fully understand what such a condition would involve. They have made only a superficial examination of the subject. What they desire is something of the same nature as the rest which they now obtain by means of sleep. This, if continued for an indefinite period, would satisfy their longings. But, from the very nature of the case, rest of this kind cannot be obtained after the soul leaves the body. The partial, sometimes apparently total, unconsciousness in which our sleeping hours are passed is due to our physical condition. The body, or the brain, becomes tired and calls for rest. But at death the body is left behind. The soul becomes entirely independent of the physical frame, and cannot be wearied or disturbed by anything that may happen to it as an organization or to the materials of which it is composed. Consequently, sleep, such as is now enjoyed, cannot be supposed to affect the soul after death.

What this sleep would involve.

If it proves true, as many suppose, that the soul will not be

entirely destitute of an organization in the realm which it enters at death, it will not follow that sleep will be either possible or desirable. The body, if one is assumed, will be fitted for the conditions which govern life in the particular sphere which will then be occupied. Whether it will need rest and sleep, like the bodies which we have in this world, it is not necessary at present to inquire, but it appears certain that there will not be a long period of unbroken slumber. If the soul were to remain in a wholly unconscious state until the time to assume the resurrection body had come, there would be no possible need, during this intervening period, of its being supplied with an organized form. Unless it were to be awake and active, at least a portion of the time, we cannot suppose that the soul would be given any tangible form until it joined either the body, or the successor to the body, from which it was parted by death.

If we reject the theory that the soul is invested in some kind of bodily form during the period between death and the resurrection, we shall find equally strong objections to the claim that, in its disembodied state, it can remain unconscious. In previous chapters the fact has been noted that the soul is vastly superior to the body. We can hardly imagine that the soul, which here is so restless and active, which allows the body to sleep only a few hours at a time and never, so far as we are able to determine, sleeps itself, should, at the very moment in which it is released from the body in which it has been a prisoner, fall into a stupor which will last for untold ages. If it does enter such a state it becomes, for all practical purposes, as inert as is the body after it is dead. And it is not at all impossible that to a disembodied soul the loss of consciousness would be equivalent to the loss of existence. It may not be going too far to assert that without self-consciousness existence "is a mere name, an empty predicate not worth talking about. There remains no bond of continuity, no basis of identity. The last vestige of personality is obliterated, the soul is annihilated."¹

This loss of identity is a great deal more radical change than those who hope for a sleep of the soul during its absence from the body desire. Of course, God could allow the soul to fall into nothingness at death and yet recreate and bring it forth in glory at the resurrection; but it is not reasonable to expect Him

¹ James Strong, S. T. D., *Doctrine of a Future Life*.

to do this. We are not to look for miracles where natural processes will answer all the purposes which it is necessary to serve. And it is certain that for all of His weary children God can provide abundant rest without giving them up to total unconsciousness when their spirits depart from the world.

Probably the great majority of the people who live in Christian lands, and who have given the subject sufficient thought to enable them to form an intelligent opinion, believe that consciousness remains practically unbroken through the event of death. Of these, there are many who hold that there is not the slightest interruption of the mental processes. Its means of communication have been so impaired that the soul cannot make its thoughts known to the friends who, with breaking hearts and weeping eyes, are awaiting its departure, but its own vision is clear, and its realization of the great crisis through which it is passing is complete. There are others who believe that at the moment of making the transit from this world to the spiritual realm the soul is either insensible or in a semi-conscious state. They regard this, however, as only a momentary condition which passes away with as little disturbance as one here experiences when he awakes from a peaceful sleep.

There is much to commend the view that there is no perceptible break in consciousness when death occurs. It is free from the very grave objections to which the other theories that have been stated are open, and which cannot be satisfactorily disproved. And it does not present special difficulties of its own. There are numerous reasons for believing that this is the correct solution of the problem. These are drawn from various sources. They vary in importance; but even the weakest are not without weight, and when all are combined they seem unanswerable.

It is granted, at the outset, that there is a great deal of mystery connected with the event of death and with what lies just over the line which separates the earthly existence from what lies beyond the scenes of time and the perception of the senses. But, as affecting the matter now under consideration, this mystery is not of special importance. The great and wholly inexplicable mystery lies farther back. It shrouds the beginning of life, and far transcends all the other

Unbroken consciousness.

The natural outcome.



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL, ENGLAND.

difficulties which the problem of existence presents. Therefore we cannot consistently reject any theory of the mere continuance of conscious life simply because it is beyond our comprehension.

After it has commenced it is natural that the life of the soul should go on. There is no apparent reason why it should not do so. It is the tendency of life to persist. All *Life tends to persist.* through the earthly course life keeps a constant warfare against destructive forces and tendencies. The body is constantly being torn down and rebuilt. It grows old, and, in accordance with a natural and an inexorable law, it declines in power and at length becomes useless. But the soul is of a very different and of an immeasurably higher nature than the body. It is the tenant of the earthly tabernacle, and survives the constant changes by which the old body is discarded and an entirely new one is provided once in about every seven years. Not only does it survive these great transformations, but it continues to increase in power long after the body has reached its prime, and in many cases it manifests, up to the very moment of death, the fullest measure of energy and versatility which it ever has possessed. In this growth and development of the powers of the soul long after the body has reached the limit of its possibilities and entered upon a decline that must inevitably end in its complete destruction, we have a strong intimation that the life and activity of the spiritual nature will go on without reference to the fate of the physical form through which its energies have thus far been manifested. It certainly is reasonable to suppose that the soul, which has been so immensely superior, both in power and in quality, while it was united with the body, will continue to maintain its relative importance after the union has been destroyed by death.

It is perfectly natural that the body should fall a prey to death. It was made for only a limited term of service. In an earlier chapter some of the changes through which *The body serves its purpose.* it passes have been noted. These changes cannot be prevented, and their destructive influence cannot be counteracted. But, though it is here for only a brief period, the body answers the purpose for which it was provided. It may not do this as perfectly as is desirable, but, if it is properly cared for, it approximates the standard which it should attain. When death

comes there is no further use which this body, as such, can be made to serve. Consequently, in accordance with a universal law, the elements of which it was composed are set free, and the organized structure passes out of existence.

As it applies to the body, all this is perfectly plain. But no such assumptions regarding the soul can be maintained. From the way in which the body is organized and developed, we know that it cannot last very long. It is liable to many diseases, and exposed to numerous accidents, any one of which may prove its ruin. But even if it escapes all of these dangers the end cannot be very far away, for then the machinery will surely wear itself out. The soul, however, seems to have been created for an existence of measureless duration. When the body has reached the period of old age the soul appears to be only in its infancy.

Unlike the body, too, the soul does not appear to have answered the purpose for which it was created. As far as we can see, nothing could be gained by extending the limit of the bodily life far beyond the threescore and ten years which is now regarded as its appropriate bound. While physical conditions remain as they now are the period of life in the body is ample for all the purposes that can be served through its instrumentality. An increase of years would add to its weariness and feebleness without in the slightest degree enlarging its capacities or increasing its powers. But the hour of death finds the soul not only in the very beginning of its development, but with undiminished possibilities of advancement. As we have seen, the life and usefulness of the body are limited by its own constitution. If it escapes dangers from without it will surely fall a prey to the disintegrating forces which are constantly at work within itself. And we can see the wisdom of this arrangement. The body is needed only for a little while. It is eminently fitting that after serving its purpose it should pass away, and that the soul which it contained should be set free.

When the time for its departure from the body arrives the soul appears to be endowed with a life that gives promise of continuance without regard to what befalls the tabernacle of flesh in which it thus far has found a home. We cannot resist the impression that the departing soul has capacities and powers of which as yet it has made only the

The soul needs further opportunity.

The powers of the soul at death.

slightest manifestations. We feel that its principal forces are still in reserve. It has talents which it has not been able to develop and which, except in the faintest outline, it has had no opportunity to display. The measure of its possible attainments is so vast in its proportions that even those who have been models of industry, and have endeavored to use wisely all the means which have been placed at their command, seem to have made only the merest beginning. Life is brief, and human strength is limited. But the weariness of toil and the weakness of age belong to the body, and to that alone. The soul is superior to these infirmities. We have reason to believe that when it is set free from the body it will be brought under more favorable influences for development and usefulness than it has hitherto enjoyed, and that, from the moment of death, its life will not merely be continued, but will grow fuller and stronger and richer as the ages pass away.

These arguments for the persistence of conscious life hold good whether the soul is immortal by virtue of its nature, or its life, while in the body, continues because God constantly exerts His power to sustain it in being. In If God upholds the soul. the one case existence would continue as a matter of course, and cogent reasons have been given for supposing that if the life of the soul goes on after it leaves the body consciousness will also persist. In the other case we have ample grounds for confidence. If God has upheld the soul in all of its earthly life we can hardly imagine that at death He will either leave it to perish or allow it to remain for untold ages in a lethargy from which it is to be aroused only at the resurrection. Having cared for it thus, and determined to bring it, in company with all other souls, to the general judgment, we can easily believe that He will guard it during the intervening period.

From very early times there has been a more or less clearly defined belief that the souls of men who had died retained some degree of consciousness. Wherever the doctrine of An early belief. a life beyond the grave has been held, the prevailing opinion seems to have been that the soul did not lose all knowledge of itself at death. We have already shown that the vast majority of men, without regard to race, or location, or mental powers, or moral development, have looked for some sort of an existence after the bodily life had ceased. Of these only a few,

comparatively, have believed that death would be followed by a long period of unconsciousness from which the soul would eventually awake. Many uncivilized peoples have placed food and the weapons of the chase upon or within the grave, in order that the departed soul might be enabled to make its journey to its future home in safety. Others have held that for a time, varying from a few days to several months, the soul remained near the spot where its body was buried. Christians, and adherents to other forms of religion, have held that at death the soul of the believer goes directly to some abode of happiness and the soul of the unbeliever sinks to a place of unrest. There have been many differences of opinion as to the details of the home and the life of the soul, but regarding its continuous consciousness there has been a very general agreement.

Naturally, indeed inevitably, the ideas of the future life which were held by savage and barbarous races were similar to those which they entertained of the life upon the earth.

Ideas far from uniform.

Their mental capacity was small, and the intellectual powers which they possessed were undeveloped. If its discomforts and privations were removed the present life would satisfy all of their desires. So they pictured the other life after the fashion of this, except that in the future the hunt should always be successful, enemies should be restrained, and the wants of the body should be fully and constantly supplied. They were content to believe that whatever made them happy here would be sufficient for them in the new home.

The life which the more cultivated of the ancient peoples thought would succeed the present state of existence was meagre and unsatisfactory. Still, it was not utter destruction. Something of the old-time power and capacity of the individual remained. And among these peoples there were many, in all, who had a clearer idea and a stronger faith regarding the future than the masses entertained. The Old Testament heroes looked for a conscious and vigorous life after they should be done with the things of earth. Seneca cheered many wavering souls by the memorable words: "This day which thou fearest so much, and which thou callest thy last, is the birthday of an eternity," and other ancient philosophers and poets and teachers believed and proclaimed the doctrine that conscious existence does not cease at death.

As people have advanced in knowledge the conviction that the period immediately following death is one of mental and spiritual consciousness and activity has become more general and much more clearly defined. *In later days.* The more we learn regarding the nature and the powers of the soul the more fully we are persuaded that death will make no appreciable interruption of the continuity of consciousness. Evidence has long been accumulating which goes to prove, on physiological and psychological grounds, that death causes no greater interference with the life of the soul than does sleep with the earthly existence. There are those who interpret the facts and phenomena upon which this opinion is based in a different manner, but the weight of authority seems to be strongly in favor of the theory of unbroken consciousness. Viewing the matter merely from a scientific standpoint, we are led to the conclusion that death is not a forcible breaking off of life, but is merely an incident which, though it involves great changes, permits existence to continue without a break.

Upon this point, as well as upon most others which have to do with the future life, the words of Scripture which are supposed to be applicable to it have been very differently interpreted by writers who have endeavored to learn and explain their meaning. *The teaching of Scripture.* Some have laid a great deal of stress upon one class of passages and given but little attention to another class which seem to have a different purport and which should have been studied with an equal degree of care. Some, too, have fallen into the obvious error of giving to passages selected from the Old Testament as much force as they have allowed to others which are found in the New Testament.

We admit that "all Scripture" is from God, but this does not change the fact, nor lessen the significance of the fact, that revelation has been progressive. A vast amount of truth of which the patriarchs and prophets had only dim and uncertain visions came into the clearest of light before the latest book of the Bible was written. Much, too, of which the earlier writers never even dreamed, was made known to their successors, and through them has been handed down to all to whom the Word of God has come. Therefore we feel that it is not merely safe, but necessary, to lay greater stress upon the hopeful strains of some of the later writers than we do upon the hesitating words of

those of earlier days to whom only a small measure of truth had been revealed. When we consider the age in which he lived, and the feebleness of the light through which he was obliged to grope his way, the faith of Job seems wonderful, but his hopeful utterances cannot stir the soul as do the triumphant affirmations of the Apostle Paul. And the same difference may be found throughout the Scriptures. The later revelation concerning his destiny is not only clearer, but it is also far more complete, than is that which was made to man at an earlier period in the history of the world.

It must also be noted that the references of Scripture to the condition of the soul during the interval between the earthly life and the resurrection from the dead are not as numerous and, as a rule, are not as explicit, as are those which relate to various other matters in which it is deeply concerned. Evidently the writers, guided by the Holy Spirit, did not consider this period in the life of the soul as approaching in importance the ones by which it is bounded. They laid great stress upon the present life as a period of preparation for the future, and they pointed to a time in which fidelity would be rewarded and neglect or transgression would bring loss and misery. But this time of publicly determining the deserts of the soul and making its destiny known to the universe was not represented as commencing when the soul departed from the body. It was to be delayed until the present order of things should close. When the appointed hour should come the dead should be raised, those living upon the earth should be removed, and the world itself should be destroyed. This life and the judgment were the great points of interest. So it need not cause surprise that the writers in question did not dwell at greater length upon the state of the soul in the interval between the close of its preparation for another state of existence and the opening of the final stage of its being. But they were not wholly silent. In addition to some specific statements in the Scriptures, there are many things which throw light upon the condition of the soul while it awaits, in an intermediate realm, the assignment to its ultimate home. There are various incidents and references which furnish indirect but convincing evidence that the souls of the departed are now in conscious existence.

To Moses, the great leader of His ancient people, God proclaimed Himself as "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When arguing with the Pharisees concerning the resurrection, Christ quoted *The God of the living.* this declaration and added the assertion that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." These illustrious men had died before Moses was born, but God revealed Himself as their God, not merely and only in the past, but also at the moment in which He was making known His will to the shepherd who was destined to become one of the greatest and grandest characters in human history. He had been their God while they were on the earth, and He remained their God after they passed beyond the sight of men. He was still their God when, after an interval of not less than fourteen hundred years, Christ told of a future life. If the ancient worthies had passed into a state of absolute unconsciousness it is not probable, in fact it is hardly conceivable, that any such reference to them would have been made. The communications were made to living men, and the manner in which the departed were mentioned indicates that their spirits were as conscious then as they had been when, long before, they had dwelt in human form.

The narrative of the appearance of the Prophet Samuel to King Saul when that monarch was in sore distress has been employed to enforce and illustrate statements made *The case of Samuel.* in an earlier chapter of this work. It also has a direct bearing upon the point now under consideration. The prophet had been dead for some years, but when this appeal for his help was made his soul was living and conscious. He had laid aside the body in which he had lived and moved while he was upon the earth, and through which he made himself known to others, but the real man was still alive. His mental powers were, apparently, as vigorous as they had ever been, and, from the fact that he regarded his return to earth as a disagreeable duty, we infer that the conditions of existence were pleasanter than they had been while he was dwelling here. The fact that he was conscious at this time proves conclusively that when he died he did not enter upon a long period of insensibility, and makes it highly probable that there was no interval in which he was not aware of his existence and his surroundings. And what was true in his case is doubtless true in the cases of all who have

died. All who are to follow may reasonably expect that the same conditions will prevail when they, too, shall lay aside the robe of flesh and their own souls shall pass behind the veil which separates the world in which men dwell in bodily form from the unseen realm in which the spirits of the departed abide.

The appearance of Moses upon the Mount of Transfiguration is another argument in favor of the doctrine that the departed soul is neither destroyed nor rendered insensible by death. Nearly fifteen hundred years before this event, Moses, in obedience to a direct command of God, had ascended a mountain peak from which he was given a view of the goodly land which had been promised to the people whom he had led for forty weary years but which he was not permitted to enter. Here he died and was buried, but no human eye saw him after he made that lonely journey up the mountain side and "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Yet he was a living, conscious, and intelligent being when, in company with the Prophet Elijah, he appeared upon the earth and conversed with Christ concerning what were to be the closing scenes in His work of redemption.

*Moses at the
Transfiguration.*

Here are two instances in which we have the full authority of Scripture for asserting that consciousness did not end with death. We know that these men died, and that after death they were living beings. As far as we can see, their mental and spiritual faculties had not been impaired in the slightest degree. And there is nothing in the Scripture narratives, or in the conditions of these cases, which indicates that, so far as consciousness and intelligence are concerned, they were at all exceptional. If these individuals retained their mental powers we are justified in supposing that other souls which have passed into the unseen world have done the same. The laws of our being have not been framed for individuals, but for the race. They apply just as fully to the humblest disciple as they do to the most eminent saint. Death can have no more power over the one than it has over the other. This fact, in connection with the cases cited, leads us to believe that the conscious life of the soul is neither extinguished nor impaired by death.

Valid evidence.

The appearance of the Prophet Elijah at the scene of the Transfiguration, while offering convincing evidence that he was

living and conscious long after his earthly life had come to an end, is not to be employed as an argument in proof of the conscious existence of all of the dead. The manner in which his spirit entered the unseen world was widely different from that in which the souls of other men depart this life. Therefore, merely from what occurred in his case, we have no right to conclude that all men will be conscious after their earthly existence is closed. His presence with Moses proves that translation did not annihilate the soul, or cause it to lose its intelligence, or its interest in the human race which Christ was upon earth to redeem, but it does not reveal the condition of a soul which had been separated from the body by the ordinary processes of death.

In support of the claim that the soul continues in conscious existence after its separation from the body has occurred, some writers have laid great stress upon the fact that after His death, and the placing of His body in the sepulchre, Christ appeared upon the earth in all the vigor of His previous life. We believe that during the interval between His death and resurrection Christ was fully conscious. He passed behind the veil which separates those living in the body from those whom we call dead, but this does not make it probable that the active life of His soul was suspended, or that its powers were in the least diminished. Upon this point, however, opinions differ. But all who accept the Bible as authority are agreed that after His dead body was laid in the tomb He manifested Himself, many times, in living form, and convinced even those who at first were unbelieving that He had again taken the life that He had, while on the cross, surrendered for sinful men.

In connection with His teaching, the fact of the reappearance of the living Christ after His crucifixion is of the greatest value in sustaining the doctrine of the persistence of the conscious life of the soul after it is separated from the body. But the mere fact that Christ proved Himself superior to death would, in itself alone, be of little weight. For Christ was far more than a mere man, and what occurred in His case cannot, simply on the ground of His experience, be regarded as certain to occur to an ordinary individual. Besides, His appearance in the body after He had been put to death was absolutely

*The Prophet
Elijah.*

*The appearance
of Christ after
His crucifixion.*

*The teaching of
Christ.*

necessary to the completion of the great work which He came to earth to perform. For these reasons the fact that death did not end the conscious existence of Christ proves nothing whatever in regard to its influence upon any one else.

When, however, we connect this fact, that Christ survived the event of death, with His teaching and His promises before He came under its power, we have the very best of evidence that for those who believe in Him the current of conscious life is not broken when they die. He foretold His departure but asserted that wherever He was there should also His servants be. He assured His followers that there were "many mansions" in His Father's house, which He would prepare for them in order that they might dwell with Him. He prayed the Father that those who had believed on Him might be with Him and behold His glory. He assured those whom He was about to leave that their separation would be brief. And the same assurance is for each and every one who shall believe in Him. The natural meaning of His promises, and the general tenor of His hints and intimations regarding the period following death, is that when the soul of the believer leaves the body it enters at once into a happy abode and continues in the possession of its mental and spiritual powers. Concerning the immediate future of those who have not, in this life, ranged themselves on His side, Christ said but little, but we find nothing to indicate that they will cease to be living and intelligent beings. We believe that a careful study of the words of Christ will lead to the conviction that He designed to teach that death makes no appreciable break in the conscious existence of the soul.

Whether what Christ has told us concerning Dives and Lazarus is a description of an actual scene, or is a figurative representation, does not, in the slightest degree, change the direction or modify the force of its illustration regarding the condition of departed souls. So far as this point is concerned, it does not matter in the least whether we are dealing with history or with parable. In either case the narrative teaches, plainly and emphatically, that life does not cease when the soul enters the world which opens to it at death. The rich man, the beggar, and the Patriarch Abraham are each and all represented as living; as remembering the earthly life, not merely in a general manner but in detail; and as having capacities for

Dives and Lazarus.

pleasure and pain as truly and as fully as they had while they dwelt in this world.

Here we obtain far more convincing testimony in favor of the doctrine that the souls of all men, without regard to eminence or to character, remain conscious during the great intermediate period of their existence than we have previously secured. Samuel and Moses were distinguished persons, and at their appearance in this world after death they were special messengers of God. If there were no other evidence we would have reason to fear that the continuance of life was granted because of their noble characters and their eminent services while they were upon the earth. This would offer encouragement to the comparatively few who, in every age, devote themselves without reserve to the service of God and their fellow men, but it would hold out but little hope for the masses of the people, who, themselves being judges, fail to reach the higher levels of existence. Some of the ancients believed that a life beyond the present would be granted to the great and good, but would be withheld from all who failed to reach distinction in these respects. It was perfectly natural for those who had not received a special revelation from God to accept this idea. And if we had no more light than comes from the fact that the two eminent servants of the Lord who have been named had not perished at death, we should be very likely to fear that such a survival would not be general, but would be reserved for those who had become noted in His service. We certainly should have reason to fear that such would be the case.

In the narrative of the rich man and the beggar we have evidence which should set all such doubts at rest. Of the three persons who are named, only one had become eminent while he was upon earth. The rich man belonged to a great class of people who live for self rather than for God. They may not be vicious, according to human codes they may not be transgressors of any law, and yet in making their own pleasure the chief end and object of their being they violate the Divine command and fail to accomplish the purpose for which they were sent into the world. The beggar was simply one of the class of the poor and the unfortunate who are always in the world. Thus the representatives of the masses of the people, as well as of the few who rise far above them, are spoken of

Strong testimony.

*Conscious life
for all.*

in the Scriptures as having retained their consciousness after death. They did not perish, and did not sink into an insensible condition. On the contrary, they appeared to be as fully endowed with life as they had been while they were active in the world. This being the case, every man has a right to expect that his conscious existence will go on after he leaves the body as truly and as clearly as it did while he was in this present world.

Another argument in favor of the belief that death does not destroy the consciousness of the soul is found in the case of the penitent thief whom Christ pardoned while upon the cross, and to whom He promised an immediate entrance into paradise. We are aware that some claim to find a different meaning in this narrative. They believe that the predicted meeting was to occur, but that it would be long postponed. It seems to us that they are mistaken. We find no hint of a suspension of conscious being. Everything in the narrative which bears upon this point suggests a continuance of the personal life, with all the mental powers unharmed. Christ not only promises the new disciple a place in which to dwell, but He also assures him of companionship with Himself. We cannot believe that He would have done this if the death of the penitent was to be followed by a long period of unconsciousness.

In the writings of the Apostle Paul we also find abundant evidence that the event of death does not end the conscious life of the soul. In writing to the church at Corinth, in regard to death and its effect upon the body and the soul, he says that he is of good courage and is "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." He was contented to live or to die, as the will of God might be, but his preference was to depart from the earth. In his letter to the Philippians he makes the bold assertion that "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Other statements of the same tenor might be quoted, but these are sufficient for our purpose. They are clear, direct, and forcible. They prove, beyond all question, that Paul fully believed that death would usher him immediately into a more desirable state of being than he could possibly attain in this world.

When we consider what manner of man it was who wrote these words we shall see that they are of the deepest significance

and the most profound importance. Had some young convert to the Christian faith, who was filled with enthusiasm and burning with zeal as he entered his new course of life and commenced operations in the field of labor which was thus opened to him, uttered similar declarations, we should feel compelled to make some allowance for his want of experience. Or, if the same statements had been made by a man whose emotional nature was very strong, and who was sometimes "carried away" by his feelings, we might consider it necessary to abate somewhat from their natural meaning. It would be only fair to expect, or at least to fear, that when the novelty had commenced to wear away and the pressure of the self-denial and the toil which noble Christian living requires came to be more fully realized, the one who at first was so ready to give up all things, even life itself, would gradually come to place a much higher relative value upon the blessings of the present world. And when his excitement had passed, we should not be at all surprised if the man who, in the midst of a great revival meeting, had longed for an immediate entrance into the unseen world should conclude that it would be better for him to remain for the present with the church on earth. In cases like these, justice requires that we take into consideration the temperament of the speaker and the circumstances under which his declarations are made.

The words of Paul, which we have quoted, do not require the slightest qualification. Paul was not young in the school of Christ when they were written, and he was not one who would allow his emotions to control his judgment. He was a man of mighty intellect and noble character. He knew the exact meaning of words and we may be sure that he really meant just what the words which he used imply. There was not the slightest exaggeration in the assertions that he was willing to leave this world, and that, in his opinion, it would be gain for him to die.

It is unquestionably true that Paul believed that death would at once introduce him, as a living and thinking being, into the spiritual world. He had no fear of sinking into unconsciousness, or of losing, in any degree, his mental powers, though he did not expect that death would bring him to a state of perfection. That condition, he knew and affirmed, could not be attained until the resurrection, when the spirit would be united with the glorified body. Still, he regarded

*Better than the
present life.*

the state which is immediately entered at death as an advance upon the present form of existence. It would not only be in the line of improvement, but it would be "far better" than life here can possibly become.

Now, in the estimation of such a man as Paul, in order to be a better condition than that of this world, consciousness would be an absolute necessity. While he was here he was in close communion with Christ, and this intimate relationship was sure to continue as long as he remained in this world. Here, too, he was actively engaged in efforts for the advancement of the cause of his Master, and in these arduous labors he found peace and joy. If death was to bring a long interval of absolute unconsciousness, equivalent to an extinction of his being for ages, he could not have regarded it as a friend. Instead of being a gain, the new condition would be a great loss. The sense of fellowship with Christ would depart and all work for Him would cease. If the Apostle had believed that death brought such consequences as these he would have desired to live in this world as long as possible. The fact that he was willing to depart proves that he expected that life would go on without interruption, and that he would continue in communion with Christ after he had entered the spiritual world. We cannot believe that Paul was mistaken in his belief that life persists beyond the grave.

In the book of the Revelation the Apostle John describes his vision of the martyrs who await the time at which their integrity shall be made clear. They long to see justice meted out to the wicked who in this world persecuted them unto death, and they desire to receive the reward which is to be given them for their own fidelity and sufferings. The Apostle says: "I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" These souls are represented as in the full possession of their intellectual powers. They remembered the experiences through which they had passed while they were upon the earth and were able to make known to others their feelings and their desires. Evidently death did not close their conscious existence. When this vision was recorded only a comparatively brief period had elapsed

*The souls of the
martyrs.*

since the persecution of Christians was begun. Had there been any prolonged sleep after death the souls which the Apostle saw would doubtless have been in an insensible condition. From the fact that they were then living and conscious we may infer that the souls of all other servants of God who have departed from earth, many of whom were as zealous and devoted as were their persecuted brethren, are also conscious from the time of their leaving the present world.

One of the great doctrines of the Christian religion is that the Spirit of God finds a home in every believer in Christ. In the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul brings out this idea with great clear-*The Holy Spirit.*ness, and it appears in various other portions of the New Testament. Christ promised that this Spirit should come, and from the depths of their own experience millions of men have testified that the promise has been fulfilled. We believe that at some time in his life this Spirit strives with every man. With those who receive Him He abides forevermore. Their bodies perish at death, it is true, but this is only a temporary deprivation. The soul is not destroyed. If we admit that while the soul of the believer remains in the body it is in constant union with the Spirit of God, it seems as though we must believe that this union never will be impaired. It appears incredible that at death the soul should be deserted by this Divine Presence, and be allowed to fall into as utter ruin as comes to the physical frame. While this is not an argument of universal application, for some men refuse to admit the Spirit to their souls, it should be given a great deal of weight in the cases of those who have had a living faith in Christ.

From the earliest days of the Christian church the doctrine of the persistence of conscious life beyond the grave has been accepted by the great majority of its members. *A doctrine of Christianity.* Many, in all, have not given it their assent, it is true. The doctrine that from the moment of death until the resurrection the soul remains in a profound sleep has frequently come into some degree of prominence, but after a short time its influence has declined. Many who have embraced this theory have been noted both for ability and for piety. They have brought forward various arguments to support their view. Some of these are plausible and offer an easy solution of a problem

which, with any other theory, presents real difficulties. Still, for reasons which have already been stated, we must adhere to the conviction that, though the Bible often refers to death as a sleep, it does not warrant the supposition that the soul becomes unconscious. The term "sleep," as used in the connection noted, is used to indicate rest, refreshment, and peace of the soul. And this is what the great mass of Christians have understood it to mean. While they have varied in belief as to the place which the soul enters at death, some holding that it is heaven itself, and others that it is a realm intermediate between earth and heaven, they have been in full accord in their views regarding the consciousness and blessedness of the souls of all the followers of Christ from the very hour of their leaving the body and passing into the unseen world.

Throughout the world we find a law of progress in constant operation. This law has been working for untold ages. In the book of nature we find the record of its vast accomplishments. Revelation also shows that much has been gained, and points to wonderful results which are yet to be secured. We can see something of the mighty march of progress in our own day. As Christianity extends its influence and the peoples of the earth become civilized, there is a vast improvement in the condition of individuals and of society, and a wonderful betterment in the appearance, and increase in the productiveness, of the region in which the new doctrines have been accepted and the new principles have been applied. Year by year the area in which these great forces of religion and civilization become the controlling powers is greatly enlarged. There is also an upward movement in the countries in which religion has long been established. The spiritual life grows stronger. The number of those in which it is manifested is constantly increasing. There is a great and continuous progress along all spiritual lines, and a remarkable increase in the degree of efficiency with which the various kinds of service which religion demands is performed.

It is expected of each and every believer in Christ that he will never be satisfied with any present attainments, but that he will constantly strive to come nearer to the perfect standard of character which the Saviour has furnished for his imitation. Whatever he has been or has done before his conversion will



CHRIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

not affect the fact that after he has entered into covenant with God, and into personal relations with Jesus Christ, he is bound to be loyal to his Creator and useful to his fellow men. His life and all his powers have, in profession at least, been devoted to God. This devotion and this service God demands as His right, though He promises a rich reward to all by whom it is rendered. He takes a deep interest in every one of His children, and constantly watches over each and all. He takes pleasure in their progress in the Divine life and delights in their prayer and their praise.

Now if God has ordained this law of progress, the effects of which we see in the world around us, and which appears to be the law of the universe, we may feel sure that it will continue in force throughout the spiritual realm. *This law universal.*

And if He takes such interest in His children during the brief period which they spend upon the earth, we are justified in the belief that His care will be over them during the time which they pass in the intermediate realm. But in order that the law of progress may prevail in the spiritual world it is necessary that the condition of the souls by which that world is inhabited should be one of conscious life. And if the long period between death and the resurrection is to be of benefit to the individual soul it is plain that consciousness and intelligence must persist. The same is true if, during this time, the soul is to render any service to its God. Here the service of the believer is imperfect, but it is something, and it is pleasing to Him. If, at death, the soul loses all knowledge of itself, praise and worship and spiritual activity of every kind must cease.

We cannot consider the case of even one soul without being strongly impressed by the fact that if it remains unconscious for ages there will be a loss of great possibilities of happiness and usefulness. But the question we are *An immense loss.* considering concerns, not merely one, but a countless number of souls. And when we include in our thought the vast multitude which are now in the unseen world, and the incalculable number of others which will be gathered there before the closing of the present dispensation, we are not merely surprised but amazed at the magnitude of the aggregate loss which will thus be incurred. For, if conscious life does not persist, millions upon millions of souls, with each passing generation, are leav-

ing a life of love, and service, and worship of God, to sink into insensibility and, so far as we are able to discover, into absolute uselessness.

If consciousness does not persist, the time will come when the souls of the vast majority of the whole human race will be entirely oblivious of themselves, and of everything in which they ever have been interested. As compared with the total number, only the merest handful can live upon the earth at any one time. So, though the population may be far greater than it now is, when the last generation that is to inhabit this world in its present form reaches the stage of action, its membership cannot be compared with the innumerable host which have departed this life. Of those who remain until the last, a large proportion will doubtless be earnest and faithful Christians. Their prayers and praises will ascend to God, and will be pleasing to Him. But the souls of the countless millions which will then form the vast congregation of the dead will be as silent as are the graves in which their bodies were laid. That such will be the case we cannot believe. It would not be in accordance with the great plan which has been in operation from the beginning of the creation until the present time. It does not commend itself to reason, and we cannot find warrant for it in the Scriptures. On the contrary, the evidence of science, of reason, and of the Bible is in favor of the doctrine that death neither terminates nor interrupts the conscious life of the soul.

The doctrine that conscious life persists brings comfort to those who mourn and should cheer the hearts of those to whom death is yet to come. It softens our grief to feel that the dear ones who have gone from earth have not perished, and have not become unconscious. Erelong we shall cross the line which separates them from us now. We shall leave all earthly possessions, and the bodies in which we have dwelt, but we shall not cease to live. Perhaps we shall be weary with the sufferings and the conflicts of the past. If so, we shall have all the rest we desire. But this will not be found in a loss of consciousness. In this world we often rest at times when we do not sleep. A change of place, or of employment, or the turning of our thoughts in a new direction, proves sufficient for our needs. Perhaps, in this respect, the existence

*The evidence
favors conscious-
ness.*

*A comforting
doctrine.*

beyond will be similar to life in this world, though, as has already been stated, it seems probable that when it is set free from the body the soul will not be subject to fatigue. In either case we may look forward to a life that is conscious and intelligent and that is continuous with the present. Bishop Phillips Brooks regarded death as "an event in life" and not at all as the closing of existence. The evidence in favor of this view is very strong. Death is a momentous event, but it does not check the conscious life of the soul.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PLACE OF DEPARTED SOULS

WHEN our friends are called away from earth it is a great comfort to feel that they have not passed out of conscious existence. It is also a cheering thought that when we follow them, as we shall surely do ere long, we shall not perish but shall merely be transferred, as they have been, from one place and state of existence to another. But this is not all that we want to know concerning those who have gone, or regarding what will befall us when we depart this life. One of the questions which we ask, often and earnestly, relates to the place in which the souls of those who come under the dominion of death abide.

A natural inquiry. It is not an idle curiosity which prompts this desire for knowledge regarding the home of the dead. It is natural that we should want to know where those who have been called away have gone, and where we, too, must go when the earthly tabernacle which shelters us now shall perish. While we are confident that life continues, we are also sure that the change which is wrought by death is one of great and solemn import. We cannot afford to exclude it from our thoughts or to treat it with unconcern. We do not think lightly of a journey to a foreign land, or to some distant city in our own country. We want to know the location of the place which we hope to reach, as well as many other things which are involved in securing a residence there. So, when we think of this great journey of death, which in importance infinitely transcends all the journeys of earth, we long for information as to where we are going, and the nature of the place at which our course shall end. It is not enough to know that life will be prolonged, and that we shall go somewhere when we leave this world. We cannot remain content with this. We must press our inquiries further.

It may be confidently asserted that there is a real place in which the souls of the departed abide. They are not wander-

ing around in space without homes or friends. God has undoubtedly provided some place for them as truly as A real place. He has for His children who are now upon earth.

The place, too, is suited to the needs of those by whom it is occupied. In some respects it may resemble this world. In others it will be widely different. But it will have all the reality of a definite place in which the soul can find just the home which it requires.

There are many who hold that the soul goes to its final home as soon as it leaves the body. Others believe that it passes into an intermediate place in which it remains until the Perhaps not the ultimate home. resurrection. These differing views will be considered in due time. The doctrine with which we are now concerned is that when a man dies his soul goes to some clearly defined locality. It leaves the world because the world is no longer fitted to be its home. The soul that is separate from the body needs a very different environment from that which it required while it dwelt in the flesh. This it finds in its new abode.

There are many persons who believe that at death the soul passes into some special state or condition instead of a definite locality. A number of writers, some of whom are A state instead of a place. of considerable eminence, have adopted this view. Their idea is very difficult to comprehend. Doubtless many a man who has carefully studied this subject has come to the same conclusion as did the late Professor Stearns, who said: "Those who talk of states rather than places in the other world use language which may have meaning to themselves, but which conveys none to my mind."¹

Place seems to be absolutely necessary to existence. Whatever exists, be it body or soul, material or spiritual, must be somewhere. The mind cannot conceive of a being Must be somewhere. with no place in which to exist. If it were proved that there is no locality in which the souls that have left this world find a home, it would, by the same process of reasoning, be demonstrated that these souls had disappeared from the universe. Such a belief cannot be sanctioned either by religion or by science. Neither does it appeal to reason. We cannot think of the souls of the vast army of the dead who are to be

¹ Lewis French Stearns, *Present Day Theology*.

gathered for the final judgment as being nowhere during the period which intervenes between death and the resurrection. If these souls are alive they are somewhere, and, consequently, must be in some definite place. From this it does not follow that the soul is confined to a particular spot, as a prisoner on earth is confined in a prison cell. It may be, and probably will be, able to change its locality quickly and easily. It is not unlikely that it will have a greater degree of freedom than it did before it was separated from the body, but this will not give it the power to be either nowhere or everywhere. As long as it continues in being it will be somewhere. Locality is, and forever will be, essential to its existence.

Still, as regards the departed soul, the idea of state is closely connected with that of place. There must be a place; but this alone would not be sufficient. It needs to be qualified by the state or character of the soul. A great deal of the joy and of the sorrow in this world is due to the habits and disposition of the individual to whom these experiences come. Neither happiness nor misery depends wholly upon place or surroundings. The same law will prevail in the spiritual world. There is no place in the universe in which a wicked man could have all the joys of heaven, or one of saintly character could suffer all the miseries of hell. The springs of happiness and of misery are largely within the soul. Paul was happy while in a prison. Herod was miserable while on a throne. The godly man has a peace that does not depend upon outward conditions, and the criminal is tormented by his own conscience. Therefore, when we think of the future life we should keep constantly in mind the fact that the quality of that existence is modified by the character of the soul as truly as it is by the place in which it finds a home.

It is not necessary to repeat at length what has been said in regard to the views of the early races of mankind upon this subject. We have seen that the opinions of different peoples were widely diverse, and that in the course of the history of some of the most prominent of these nations there were marked changes of belief. Some have thought that the departing soul ascended to the sky, while others held that it went to a dark underworld. There has also been a difference of opinion as to whether all souls went to one place, or whether

*A place, but also
a state.*

Early views.

the good and the bad were sent to separate localities. In the Old Testament the dead are spoken of as being in Sheol, a dark underworld. In many places in the King James version this term was rendered hell. At some times in their history the Hebrews regarded this as the common home of departed spirits. At others they appear to have thought of it as containing a separate abode for the wicked. This they called Gehenna. The Greeks named the home of the departed Hades, but they divided it into two regions, — Elysium, the place of the good, and Tartarus, the abode of the wicked. Many of the early Christians held that at death all souls entered Hades, which was regarded as an intermediate realm, in which they would be detained until the resurrection, at which time the good would enter heaven and the bad would be consigned to hell. Like the Greeks, too, they believed that the righteous and the wicked occupied separate portions of this abode. The latter idea, however, was not universal. There were many who held that Hades was merely the common home of souls that had departed from this world.

The word "paradise" was originally used to designate a beautiful park or garden, and was a common term in Oriental lands. Long before the coming of Christ it was familiar to the Jewish people. It was applied by them to Eden, ^{Paradise.} the home of our first parents and the abode of innocence and bliss. It was also often employed to designate the place of the blessed dead. To their minds it pictured a delightful home in which the righteous would dwell in happiness and security. Some appear to have regarded it as a temporary abode in which the good were to dwell until the resurrection. Others held that it was at least a part of heaven, and the final abode of those who should enter the kingdom of God.

The same difference of opinion is seen at the present day, and among the people of perhaps all Christian lands. But whether the name is used to denote "some vestibule of the heavenly kingdom" in which the good find their home until the present dispensation shall close, or is employed to represent heaven itself, it conveys the idea of a peaceful and a happy region into which evil can never come. It is a fitting designation of the country into which the faithful children of God enter when they leave the cares and lay down the burdens which are inseparable from the earthly life.

So far as we know, Christ used the word "paradise" only once during His life upon the earth. This single instance was while he was hanging upon the cross. One of the thieves who had been crucified with Him repented of his sin and cried for mercy only a few hours before his death. In answer to the prayer of the dying malefactor Christ assured him that upon the very day, which was then drifting into the past, they would be together in paradise. We are not told where this place of meeting was located. But the term itself, and the manner in which it was used, prove beyond all question that after his death the soul of the penitent criminal was to be in a real place, as well as in a state or condition of happiness. This being assured, we may have full confidence that in the world beyond the one in which we now abide there is a place for every human soul.

Another evidence that the souls of men pass from some definite locality in this world to some equally certain region in an unseen realm is found in the visions of the martyr Stephen, and of the Apostles Paul and John, which are recorded in the New Testament. Of the former, it is said that he "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Paul declares that on a certain occasion he had been "caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." John had many visions. Of these, one of the most magnificent was a view of "the holy city Jerusalem," which had no need of either the sun or the moon to shine upon it, for it was lighted by the glory of God and of the Lamb. Now in each of these visions a definite locality was observed. And there was nothing mystical or unreal about the character or the condition of the places which were said to have been seen. Each observer knew that he saw something, and he had a clearly defined idea of what that something was. Coming to us, as they do, with the authority of the Word of God, the statements which these men have made must be accepted as valid testimony that the spiritual world is as truly a locality as is the earth upon which we now have our homes.

In modern times opinions as to the place which the soul enters at death have been as numerous and as conflicting as they were at any previous period in the history of the world. The

materialist, as we have seen, teaches that instead of going to a new home the soul passes out of existence when it leaves the body. We cannot accept his doctrine. *Modern opinions.*

We are confident that life proceeds without interruption.

There are, also, philosophers who assure us that the soul is immaterial, and that, for this reason, we are not warranted in speaking of it as going anywhere. With the practical man this objection will have no weight. He is more anxious to obtain facts than he is to express his thoughts in strictly philosophical phrases. He believes that if the soul continues to exist after death it must be somewhere. He is sure that it does not remain in the dead body. It must be "elsewhere or nowhere." Therefore, all who hold that the soul does not perish at death are compelled to believe that when it parts from the body it finds another place, which is just as real as was the body in which it was born, and in which the current of its life can continue to flow.

There are many who believe that until Christ descended into Hades, after His death upon the cross, the souls of all who departed this life passed into this great kingdom of the dead and were there detained. The good, however, *A change wrought by Christ.* who had served God according to the light which they had received, and many of whom had earnestly longed for the coming of the Messiah, were in the pleasantest part of the realm. The bad occupied another and a more gloomy division, while the hopelessly wicked were imprisoned in a bottomless pit from which they never could be released.

The descent of Christ into Hades, and His proclamation of the Gospel to its inhabitants, wrought a wonderful change in this dreary realm. When He departed He took with Him a mighty host of souls who had accepted Him as their Saviour, and who, on account of this act of faith, were set free from their captivity and were granted an immediate entrance into Heaven. Those who rejected Him remained in the kingdom of death. From that time only the souls which have failed to become united to Christ enter this underworld. The souls of all who have placed their trust in Him pass directly into Heaven when they leave the body. In these two places, Hades and Heaven, the souls of the dead will be constantly gathering until the present dispensation shall close, and here they will await the summons to the general judgment of mankind.

Perhaps the view just stated is the most widely held of any which finds acceptance among Christian people. It has long been a standard doctrine with some of the large and influential branches of the Church. In the Homily against the Fear of Death, which has been used by the Church of England some three hundred and fifty years, is found the statement "that death delivering us from our bodies, doth send us straight home into our own country, and maketh us to dwell presently with God forever in everlasting rest and quietness." About a century later the Westminster Confession of Faith, perhaps the most clear, forcible, and complete statement of religious doctrine which has ever been formulated, was given to the world. The paragraph which refers to the topic which we have now under consideration reads as follows: "The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none."¹ While this Confession is the recognized standard of doctrine of the Presbyterian Church, in this country and abroad, its teaching in respect to the character of the place which will be occupied by the souls of men who have departed this life are in harmony with that of various other denominations.

There are, however, a great many people who believe that from the hour of death to the time of the resurrection the soul dwells in a place that is best described as an intermediate realm. They find reasons in the Scriptures for this belief, and there are evidences derived from other sources which seem to give considerable support to the theory. In common with those who reject the idea of any "middle place," they admit that during the interval between its departure from this world and its union with the body to which it is to be joined in its final state, the soul is in an imperfect condition. This condi-

¹ *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter xxxii. 1.

tion may be very much better than that to which it was subjected before its separation from the body, and yet be greatly inferior to that which will prevail when the new body has been assumed. It is reasonable to suppose that this will be the case.

We can see no greater objection to the doctrine of an intermediate place for souls than we can to the theory that for a time after leaving the body these souls are in an intermediate state or condition. Why they should enter their final home before they reach their final condition of existence we do not understand. From what we know of the laws which prevail in the natural world we are justified in supposing that in the spiritual realm the environment will be suited to the needs of the souls which dwell therein. But unless there is a marked change in the character of souls as they leave this world, an intermediate abode would seem to be absolutely necessary to the furnishing of such an environment.

*Doctrine of an
intermediate
place not
unreasonable.*

In this world we have only the beginnings of the spiritual existence. The great majority of those who try to follow Christ make but little progress in the Divine life. Even the great Apostle Paul, after he had become eminent in the work of the Lord, felt that he had many imperfections. He wrote to the Philippians that he had not been "made perfect," but was still striving to reach "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Yet, as compared with the Apostle, the mass of Christians are people of very ordinary attainments in piety. Multitudes who are trying to follow the path of duty are only "babes in Christ." Compared with the number of those who hope to be saved, there are very few who consider themselves, or whom other people believe to be, fully prepared to enter heaven. As a rule, to which there are but few exceptions, the life of earth is upon a far lower plane than the life of the world which is to be the final home of all who are saved through Christ. Those who live the noblest lives admit that they fall far below the requirements of a holy God, while those who have had less light, or who have made less effort, are manifestly unfit to enter a realm in which holiness is the test of admission.

*We are only
beginners here.*

We do not deny that God has the power to make the soul of the weakest and most immature Christian "perfect in holiness" in the article of death, and thus fit it to be "received into the highest heavens" in the very moment in

*Not impossible
with God.*

which it leaves the body. Neither are we prepared to assert that He does not do this. But it seems to us that such a course would not be in accordance with His method of working as it has been revealed to us along other lines. Throughout the natural world everything proceeds in accordance with a regular order of growth and development. In the mental world the same process is observed. In both of these realms everything goes on in a steady and a uniform manner.

So far as it lies within the limits of our observation, the same is true of the spiritual world. The religious life follows a line of growth and development just as truly as does the physical or the mental life. The great sinner does not at once become a great saint. Like every one else who enters it he must begin at the beginning in the school of Christ. And he must learn just as others learn. He must go over the whole course. It will not do for him to omit anything. And he is not authorized to expect any special manifestation of Divine power in his behalf. God will help him if he prays in faith, just as He will help any other man who comes to Him in a proper spirit and presents a reasonable request. In each and every case the man who complies with the conditions upon which the promises of God are based is the man who obtains the blessing which is desired.

It seems reasonable to expect that the law which is so universal in this world will continue in force after the soul has passed into another realm. If this supposition is correct, the soul enters the place of departed spirits with just the same character as it had when it parted from the body. Its degree of development is just the same in the first moment of its life in the spiritual world that it was in the last moment of its stay upon the earth. The man who was weak and wavering on this side of the river of death does not become a strong and courageous saint the instant that he reaches the other bank. The event of death, solemn and momentous though it is, cannot be expected to make of a halting Christian, who has only a trembling hope of being saved, a fearless and triumphant saint like the Apostle Paul. All that we seem justified in expecting it to do is to place the soul under better conditions for growth and development than it had while it remained in the body.

Probably the great majority of Protestants who reject the doc-

trine that there is a place, between this world and the final abode of souls, in which the departed remain until the resurrection, are not nearly as widely separated in belief from those who hold that there is an intermediate realm, as a superficial examination of their views would indicate. Many who hold that all Christians enter heaven when they die believe that large numbers who are weak and ignorant will be admitted. They expect, however, that these apparently unqualified ones will be strengthened and instructed, and will thus gradually become fitted for citizenship in the new realm.

Difference in opinion.

There are others who believe that this work of preparation and development must be done before, instead of after, the soul enters heaven. It seems to them that there is an intermediate realm in which this work is carried on. In the educational institutions of this world we require pupils to be fitted for entrance before they are admitted. We do not send them from the primary school directly to the university. Between these two points there must be a great deal of study and discipline. There are schools of various grades in which all the necessary preparation for still higher studies can be obtained. Something similar to this may be provided for the spiritual development and education of souls in the intermediate realm. This will be considered in a later chapter. The point to be established here is that the existence of an intermediate place for souls which have been separated from their earthly bodies is not at all unreasonable.

Another reason for believing that at death the soul enters an intermediate realm instead of its final home is found in the fact that such a supposition seems to harmonize much better than any other theory with the usually received doctrine of the general judgment. The judgment, which, so far as mankind are concerned, is universal, is to take place at the close of the present dispensation. Then the righteous and the wicked will appear in their resurrection bodies, with which they have just been clothed, and a judicial decision regarding the character of each individual will be rendered in the presence of the assembled universe. As the host is gathered the vast multitude will be divided into two classes, which will remain separated forever. When the decree is pronounced each company will go to the place which has been specially prepared for its reception.

Relation of the place of the soul to the judgment.

It seems very strange that a soul should enter heaven at the moment of death, remain there in supreme happiness for a long period, perhaps for countless ages, and at the close of the present order of things be brought to a public trial, acquitted, and formally declared entitled to a place among the blessed ones who had been found faithful in the service of God. If it has been in heaven during all the time that has passed between the death of the body and the resurrection, it is difficult to see why a public announcement of the fact that it is righteous should be made. The presence of the soul in the home of the saved would be the most convincing evidence which could be obtained that it has been fully accepted as a candidate for that abode. In some way its character must have been tested and determined before the soul could enter heaven. After this has been done, and the soul, which is the real man, has received part of its reward for fidelity, there does not appear to be a reason for making further inquiry as to its deserts.

The theory that the final home is entered at death presents still greater difficulties in the case of the wicked than it does in its application to the good. If the wicked are con-
Punishment before condemnation. signed to hell in the very moment that they die there will be millions of souls who, so far as we know, have never been tried or condemned, yet who have, for untold ages, been compelled to suffer on account of their sins. At the judgment they will have a public trial, will be pronounced guilty, and will be sentenced, although the infliction of the punishment which these souls are found to deserve commenced thousands of years before. As in the case of the good, the judgment cannot be required in order to determine the character and specify the proper place for the soul. All this was settled at death and the soul was then committed to its new home.

The theory that at death the righteous go at once to heaven, and the wicked are immediately swallowed up in hell, brings the trial and the verdict after, instead of before, the
Possible error. reward is in part bestowed, or the infliction of punishment is commenced. If God has ordained this to be the order of events He has, undoubtedly, done so for a purpose that is both wise and beneficent. No injustice will be done in any case. But, apparently at least, the method indicated is not in harmony with the ordinary course of the dealings of God

with men. The difficulty which this theory involves seems to give good ground for the doctrine of an intermediate place in which departed souls remain until they are brought to a public trial at the close of the life of the human race in this world. It is possible, also, that there may have been some admixture of error in those forms of presentation of the doctrines of the resurrection and the final judgment which have led to the conclusion that for the soul which is absent from the body no place except heaven or hell has been provided. This point will be considered in separate chapters upon these topics.

Many who reject the theory that at death the righteous are admitted to heaven and the wicked are cast into hell believe that as they leave the body all souls pass into a common realm in which they remain until the res-^{Hades.}urrection and judgment. Practically they hold, so far as place is concerned, to the view which was current among the Hebrews and Greeks before the coming of Christ. As to the conditions which prevail in this new home they differ widely from the ancients and also are at variance among themselves. They are at one, however, in the belief that the final home of the soul is not entered when it leaves the body. It passes into another place, as well as another state of existence. The Greek word "hades," translated hell in the King James version of the Bible, answers the purpose of description as fully as any single term that can be employed. It stands for an unseen world, but does not necessarily involve the idea of punishment for the souls that are gathered therein, though many believe that in a certain portion of this realm those who have died without repentance suffer for their sins.

From the narrative, or parable, of the rich man and the beggar, interpreters have formed widely differing theories of the place of souls in the period immediately following death. After stating the great disparity in the con-^{Different interpretations.}dition of these men while they were in this world, Christ said: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Many have assumed that both Dives and Abraham were in

Hades. They have supposed the gulf of which the patriarch speaks to be a line of separation between two portions of a single realm. The good were upon one side of this gulf, the wicked upon the other. While there are some reasons in its favor, it is not certain that this interpretation can be sustained. Christ does not say that the persons named were in the same abode. He does say that the rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus, but they were "afar off." He also states that a conversation was carried on between Dives and Abraham. If similar statements were made regarding occurrences in this world we should be sure that the parties who figured in the narrative could not have been separated by any very great distance. But the case in question relates to the spiritual world, and we have no means of knowing with what powers of vision or of hearing the occupants of that vast realm may be endowed. The phrase "afar off" carries the idea of a wider separation than mere provinces in a single kingdom would indicate, and goes to prove that at death the souls of the righteous and the souls of the wicked pass to different abodes in the unseen world.

These abodes may be temporary and may be exchanged for others of the same general nature at the judgment. Some have ventured to hope that, in the cases of many souls, great moral changes may occur during this intermediate period which will fit them for a higher state of existence when they enter the final home. This matter will receive attention in due time. What we wish to emphasize here is that the narrative seems to place beyond question the fact that there are actual places, as well as states or conditions, for departed souls.

The establishment of the fact that souls have a real place of abode after they leave the body which they have used while on the earth is a source of comfort, but it throws no light upon the question of locality. It assures us that those who have died have found a place in which to dwell, and makes it clear that we, too, shall go somewhere when we die. But whether this new home is near us, or is so distant that the most vivid imagination cannot enable us to form even the faintest conception of the immensity of the intervening space, it does nothing whatever to determine.

Unless we conceive of the new home of the soul as so vast that a line drawn from any given point, and in any direction,

*A question of
locality.*



DEDICATION OF SAMUEL TO THE LORD.

must reach it, we see at once that the popular terms which are used to designate the locality of heaven or of hell, or of an intermediate place which forms a general realm of detention for the souls of all of the dead, must be incorrect. It is common to speak of heaven as above the earth, and of hell as beneath. But a point that is directly over one man will be in the opposite direction to another man who lives on the other side of the globe. Besides, owing to the constant motion of the earth, a locality which was directly overhead at one hour of the day would be in a very different relative position a few hours later.

Some writers have, with a good deal of ingenuity, elaborated a theory that the home of the soul between death and the resurrection is in a vast abyss, or cavern, in the centre of the earth. Here all souls go when they are parted from the bodies which they have animated during the earthly life. It is not necessary to suppose that the good and the bad occupy separate portions of this underworld realm, though there are those who hold that this is the case.

Various quotations from the Scriptures are employed in support of this theory. It is noted that when Saul had persuaded the woman at En-dor, who had "a familiar spirit," to call the soul of Samuel from the unseen world, the prophet and judge asked the wretched and anxious king: "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" There are, also, other references in the narrative to the ascending, or bringing up, of the departed spirit. The statement of Christ that, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," has been accepted, by some, as sufficient evidence that the place of departed souls is in the centre of the world upon the surface of which their previous life was passed. Then, too, the questions of the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans: "Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)," and in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?" are, in discussions upon this point, given a good deal of prominence. Various other statements, or supposed implications, of the Scriptures are also brought into service in behalf of this theory.

The words, "He descended into hell," or their equivalent, which are found in that form of the Apostles' Creed which is *The Apostles' Creed.* in the most frequent use, are supposed by some to prove that the authors or compilers of that brief but comprehensive summary of religious belief were confident that the abode of the dead is in the centre of the earth. And there is no question that Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers, taught that after His death Christ spent three days in "the most inward and innermost recess" of this present world. This, however, does not appear to have been the general opinion of the Fathers, and it certainly is not the prevailing doctrine of the present day.

We believe that, in both the Scriptures and the Creed, the language which is quoted as evidence upon this point is figurative rather than literal. In the passages which have here been noticed, and in others of a similar purport, there was no attempt to locate the place in which the souls which have left this world find their home. This was not the object which the writers had in view. What they said in respect to locality was, we believe, merely incidental. They used, just as people of the present day are constantly using, common terms in a general way, and without reference to their strict scientific meanings.

The theory that the soul goes to the centre of the earth when it departs from the body does not seem probable, and, certainly *Reason and science.* in the cases of the good, does not commend itself to reason. Neither does it find support in science. Although geologists are not agreed as to the condition of the interior of the globe upon which we dwell, they have proved enough to make it plain that it is not such a place as we should expect a loving Father would provide as a home for His children during the period which is bounded on one side by death and on the other by the resurrection of the dead. It seems to us that both the evidence and the probabilities are strongly against the theory that at death the soul goes to a place that "is situated down, beneath our feet, in the centre or the heart of the earth."

Another theory regarding the place of the departed is that it *Worlds within worlds.* is located in an invisible universe, interpenetrating the one which we see, and governed by different laws from those to which matter is subject, yet as real and sub-

stantial as is the system of worlds concerning which we obtain information through our senses. Though at first this seems to be an absurd conception, a careful and extended examination of the evidences in its favor has convinced many eminent students that it is not only not impossible, but that it is not more improbable than are various other conclusions which science has clearly demonstrated to be in full accordance with the facts which they seek to explain.

This theory is not new, but it has been more frequently and more forcibly brought to the attention of the public during the past few years than it had been at an earlier period. By many it is rejected as principally or wholly conjectural. Some go so far as to assert that "there is not a particle of evidence for it." But there are a considerable, and a rapidly increasing, number of persons who may be justly regarded as leaders in science and religion who, in some form or other, hold to the theory of an "unseen universe" which is near at hand and is inhabited by spiritual beings. And, as is the case when innovations are made in other lines of investigation, they have many followers from the ranks of those who, though earnest and thoughtful, find their duties so many and so onerous that in matters of this kind they are obliged largely to accept the opinions of others rather than attempt to solve the great problems themselves.

It is admitted by its advocates that the theory presents real difficulties. But it is neither wise nor reasonable to reject the idea simply because we do not see how it can be true. He has studied to very little purpose who has not learned that the natural, or as it is often termed the material, universe presents many phenomena which are nothing less than marvelous. Every human being is constantly in the presence of mysteries which no finite mind can fathom.

As an example, let us once more refer to what is called the force of gravitation. This acts through what appears to be a vacuum, but it also acts, with an equal degree of efficiency, through obstructions of every known kind and extent. To this force "all media are, as it were, absolutely transparent, nay, non-existent; and two particles at opposite points of the earth affect each other exactly as if the globe were not between. The action is, so far as we can

*Not impossible
because difficult
to understand.*

*Wonderful phenomena in the
natural world.*

observe, instantaneous, so that every particle of the universe is at every moment in separate cognizance, as it were, of the relative position of every other particle of the universe at the same moment of time.”¹ Surely these are as “incomprehensible conditions” as are required to sustain the theory of a spiritual universe within and around the one with which we are familiar. Yet we have the most abundant and conclusive evidence that there is such a force as gravitation, and that it acts in the wonderful manner which has been described.

A still more marvelous condition is observed when the facts regarding what is termed space are explained. Instead of being empty, or at most containing merely the atmosphere, space is filled with something that is “immensely more solid and elastic than steel.” This luminiferous ether, as it is called, is everywhere in space, and penetrates almost every known substance. It cannot be seen, and it apparently offers no resistance to the multitudes of worlds which are passing through it at an enormously high velocity, yet the leading scientists of the world affirm that it is as solid as adamant, and exerts a pressure of about seventeen billion pounds per square inch. “All our ordinary notions must be laid aside in contemplating such an hypothesis; yet it is no more than the observed phenomena of light and heat force us to accept.”²

There is also a mighty, yet silent and invisible force, which acts upon the minds and hearts of men, and which often appears to be closely bordering upon the miraculous in its effects. Probably the majority of the people of Christian lands who have reached mature years have seen remarkable instances of its operations. As an illustration let us take the case of a man who has reached middle life without becoming interested in religion. He knows but very little about the Bible, and his appreciation of it is as slight as is his knowledge. His life is given to the advancement of his own interests and those of his immediate friends. It is centred in this present world.

The habits of thought and the ways of life of such a man are firmly established. There is every reason to believe that as long as he remains in this world he will live just as he has been living in the past. But some day, as he is going on in his

¹ W. Stanley Jevons, *Principles of Science*.

² *Ibid.*

*In the spiritual
realm.*

accustomed manner, he is awakened out of his selfishness and worldliness. He yields to the mysterious influence which has stirred his soul. Henceforth he is a new man. The purpose of his life is changed. The God of whom in earlier years he had seldom thought has now become the supreme object of his devotion. He is animated by the same spirit as was the Apostle Paul when he described himself as "a servant," really a bond-servant or slave, of Jesus Christ. Selfishness, which was so long the controlling principle of his life, is now abhorred. His whole character has been revolutionized.

In effecting this radical change of character there has been no outward demonstration of power. The influence, though sufficient to make the man break the fetters of his old habits and turn forever from sins in which he had persisted for many years, was silent and unobtrusive. And there has been no great modification of the general appearance of the subject of this transformation of character. He is known by the same name and continues to occupy his old home. His neighbors and friends still see the physical form with which they have become familiar, yet they realize that a new force now controls his life.

Whether we desire to do so or not, we shall be obliged to admit that we are living in the presence of tremendous forces, which are themselves invisible, but which are re-
vealed to us through the wonderful results which *Patient investigation needed.* are accomplished through their agency. Concerning some of these forces mankind is only just beginning to learn. This fact should make us tolerant of new theories which are put forth to explain the mysteries which the human mind naturally and earnestly desires to explore. It should also make the inquirer patient in his investigation of claims which, while apparently having some foundation in fact, yet make large drafts upon faith.

The idea that space is "the highway of worlds" is not more difficult to entertain than were various earlier conjectures concerning the system to which the earth belongs, which scientists have been compelled by an imposing array of facts to accept as true. Even the theory that there may be worlds "pervading each other unseen and unknown in the same space" can hardly be considered more stupendous than are various other theories, for the establishment of which a reasonable degree of proof has been secured.

There seems to be ground for believing that the illimitable space which has been so long regarded as unoccupied is peopled with worlds which we do not see, and which are controlled by forces regarding which we have little or no information. Certainly it is not impossible that in this vast domain are the homes of spiritual beings, perhaps of many classes of such beings, who live under altogether different conditions from those of earth. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose that among these spiritual existences are the souls of those members of the human race who have lived and died in this world. Neither does it appear improbable that when we depart from the frail tenements in which our spirits dwell during their stay upon earth, we, too, shall pass into some part of this now invisible realm.

It is a pleasing thought, and one which we believe to be based upon reasonable grounds, that the souls of those who leave this world find their new homes in a locality that is not far from the earth upon which their life began. This seems much more natural than does the theory that the souls of the good rise with the rapidity of lightning to an abode of the blest, which is at an inconceivable distance from this world, and that with equal swiftness the souls of the wicked pass to a region of despair. Not only is this view more probable when tested by reason and science, but it appears to be in harmony with the statements and intimations of Scripture which have reference to the place of the dead during the period which immediately follows the separation of body and soul.

There appears to have been, in all ages, a quite widely accepted belief that the souls of the departed do not at once go to any very distant realm. Whatever might be their final destination, these souls were, by many people, supposed to find a place of abode that was not widely separated from the world from which they disappeared at death. We have seen, in previous chapters, that various early races, and uncultivated peoples of later times, have believed that for a while after death the soul hovered near the place in which the body had been laid. And to some extent this opinion also prevailed among the more scholarly nations of ancient times. Christianity teaches the continuance of life, but rejects the idea of such a meagre and dreary existence as some of the earlier religions and philosophies

Worlds in space.

Not far away.

A prevalent opinion.

had pictured. It affirms the fact that death does not take man away from the care of God, though it does not attempt to fix with any degree of precision the location of the home of the departed soul.

As has been stated, there are many who hold that at death the soul immediately passes to its final abode. Some large religious denominations accept this view, and many able theologians teach it as a very strong probability, if not *A desire of the afflicted.* as a clearly revealed truth. Of those who adopt this theory it is probable that the great majority believe that the good go to a very different place from that to which the wicked are assigned. These realms are supposed to be distant from each other, as well as far from this world. When the mind and heart are not specially moved, this view does not present very great difficulties. But in the time of deep affliction the sense of this vast intervening space between the living and the dead is an additional cause of grief. At such times the afflicted, and those who attempt to minister consolation, are not satisfied with the thought that the departed have passed to an inconceivably distant home. They would like to believe that it is only a short distance from the home here to the abode beyond. Not infrequently their words show that there is not only this longing to have the departed near them, but that there is also a vague hope, if not a faint belief, that the spirit world is very near to the world of sense.

It is not at all uncommon for preachers, and for writers for religious periodicals, to represent death as merely the passing of the soul from one apartment of our Father's house to another. We may imagine this dwelling to be so *Common representations.* large as to contain homes at vast distances from each other, but this would take from the illustration a great deal of the comfort which it would give if its natural meaning were not greatly expanded. As we do not like to think of God as far removed from earth, so we have an instinctive desire that He will not separate us, by any vast distance, from those of our loved ones who precede us to the spirit realm. And it is not at all impossible that Mrs. Stowe expressed a "literal and scientific truth" in respect to this abode, in the lines:—

"It lies around us like a cloud —
A world we do not see;
Yet, the mere closing of an eye
May bring us there to be."

Bishop Simpson also believed that the homes of the living and those of their deceased relatives and friends were not widely separated. He thought of the departed as living "just beyond the line of the invisible. . . . The associates of our lives, that walked along life's pathway, those with whom we took sweet counsel, and who dropped by our side, where are they but just beyond us, not far away — it may be very near us, in the heaven of light and love."

Many other prominent writers might be quoted in support of the opinion that the spiritual universe is not far from the one with which our senses have made us familiar. In addition to what has already been said, numerous arguments might be advanced to prove that this theory is sound. But in treating questions of this nature we must not only consider what would be pleasing to ourselves, what is naturally to be expected under the circumstances, and what light science can throw upon them; but we must also find what information, if any, the Scriptures can supply. And, whether it coincides with our desires and our opinions or not, whatever the Bible directly states, or clearly implies, must be regarded as decisive.

It has often been asserted that the Scriptures give us nothing that can properly be called knowledge regarding the place of the dead. And it has been claimed by some that as neither prophet, priest, nor apostle, nor even the Saviour Himself, gave the information, it follows that God did not design to have us learn the locality of the future home. But this conclusion must be regarded as erroneous. For the same objection to study and investigation can be offered with an equal degree of force in respect to many matters which are essential to the well-being of mankind. A man who should rest contented with what was clearly revealed, and should refuse to seek explanations of the more obscure portions of the Scriptures, might be a Christian, but he would be an ignorant one. He might "grow in grace," but his deficiency in knowledge would leave him very poorly equipped for the service of God. It is no less a duty than it is a privilege to seek light upon the Bible from every available source.

As has been stated regarding the reticence of Christ as to other matters pertaining to the future life, the great purpose for which He came into the world was to teach men to so live here

that they would be happy hereafter. For all who were faithful to Him there was to be a home. Just where it was He did not say. But He assured them that it should be ready for them, and that they would be welcomed to it at death. *Why Christ was reticent.*

There was another reason, and possibly it was the principal one, why Christ did not tell His disciples the situation of the realm which they would enter at death. This grew out of their ignorance of the natural world. With the narrow views of the universe which were held by even the most learned of that time, it would have been impossible, humanly speaking, to have imparted clear ideas of any locality that was not under the immediate observation of His hearers. They knew but little concerning the visible universe, and a considerable part of what they thought they knew has been proved to be incorrect. Mankind had not then learned "the alphabet of nature." Consequently, they were in no condition to receive instruction concerning its higher principles. Then, too, the time which Christ was to spend upon earth with His disciples was limited to a very few brief years. There was no opportunity to do more than to explain and enforce the principles of the spiritual kingdom which He had come to set up in the hearts of men.

The ignorance which in the time of Christ made it useless to attempt to impart information regarding the locality of the home to which the souls of men are admitted at death also prevailed, and presented similar difficulties, when the later books of the Bible were written. *The later books of the Bible.* Besides, it was not a part of the work of the authors of those books to teach the principles of science, or to explain the phenomena of the natural world. They were to be followed by men who would discover and explain the laws which govern matter and mind, and who would make plain many things which then were enveloped in mystery. But they themselves were called to be religious guides and spiritual teachers. Their work must of necessity be along different lines from those which are followed by secular educators.

While the Scriptures have but little to say directly as to the whereabouts of the present abiding-place of the departed, they do not leave us without strong intimations that it is not far away from the earth. *Intimations that the home of souls is near.* They contain narratives and statements which, though not introduced

for this special purpose, appear to justify this interpretation. Though indirect, their evidence is both interesting and important.

In the Old Testament we are told of a king of Syria who made war against Israel, and whose expedition did not prosper because the king against whom it was directed was informed in advance concerning its movements. Finding that the Prophet Elisha had given the information, and learning where he could be found, the Syrian king resolved to dispatch a force to Dothan to make him a prisoner. From this point the narrative proceeds as follows: "Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." ¹

Probably it seemed, at first, to the young man for whose enlightenment the prophet prayed, that there had been an instant and a most remarkable change in the conditions under which he was placed. But he would have been easily convinced that both the material world and the invisible realm remained the same as they hitherto had been. Whatever he saw after his eyes were opened was there before the range of his spiritual vision was enlarged. And it may be that all around us there is existence and action of which we are not conscious now, but which we shall behold as soon as we escape the limitations of the physical frame. The home of the souls which have gone from earth may be so close at hand that those who are living upon a high spiritual plane need only a little fuller development of their powers to bring them into a clear consciousness of its nearness. And it is neither impossible nor improbable that other beings, in countless numbers, also abide in this domain. In this connection the following lines by Lord Lytton are at least suggestive: —

*A quickening of
spiritual percep-
tions.*

¹ 2 Kings vi. 14-18.

“ And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless Universe
Is life — there are no dead.”

In the New Testament an incident is related which favors the supposition that the home of various classes of spiritual beings, including the souls of men who have passed through the experience of death, is not far from the globe upon which we live. Thus, we read that at the crucifixion of Christ some of the saints “that had fallen asleep” really entered Jerusalem, “and appeared unto many.” The most reasonable explanation of this incident is that some of the living believers in Christ were the subjects of a great and sudden increase in their power of spiritual perception which enabled them to look into what had been to themselves, and still remained to others, the invisible world. *An appearance of departed saints.*

As will be explained in a succeeding chapter, the fact that the departed saints appeared in a bodily form does not compel us to believe, even if they actually passed along the streets, that the bodies which had been placed in the tomb were again brought into use. We do not question the facts that these saints were seen, and that their forms were so slightly changed as to be easily recognized by men who had known them before they died. But the statement that they “appeared unto many” strongly supports the theory that they were seen in their own home in the spiritual world. The observers were upon earth. The observed were probably in a home of souls that lies just beyond the range of our mortal vision.

If the departed had really appeared in their natural bodies, and walked the streets of Jerusalem, they would not have simply “appeared unto many,” but would have been seen by the great mass of the inhabitants of the city. Such an appearance would have created intense excitement. All who could have done so would have rushed forth to witness the amazing spectacle. As this did not occur, we must believe, in want of evidence to the contrary, that the change which was noted was in the mental and spiritual state of the living, and not in the condition of those who had died. It seemed real to those who made the report, and, with the exception of the locality, it was real so far as what was said to have been seen was concerned. Those who did not see the saints who were said to have departed and returned,

remained in their normal condition. Those who did see them probably had their spiritual perceptions so quickened that they "looked in upon the immortal world."¹

It is also probable that this enlargement of the sphere of the spiritual vision, or an awakening of power which up to this time had lain dormant, was what occurred when the
Visions of the Apostles. Apostle Paul saw the glories of Paradise and the Apostle John beheld the magnificence of the New Jerusalem.

Numerous quotations from the Bible might be made which, though not asserting it as a fact, give support to the claim that
Other indications from the Bible. "we dwell among invisible but eternal verities, — personalities and substances." If this claim is true, we surely have reason to believe that among these personalities, which are to us invisible, are our friends who have died. They are in another realm, and in another state of being than our own, but they are in conscious life, and their home is not far from the scene of our present conflict and toil.

Although we have not been able to determine the locality of the home of departed souls, we have found abundant evidence
A certain place of abode. that it is a real place. Whether it is, as we believe, not far from earth, or is, as many assert, at an inconceivable distance from this world, is an intensely interesting though not a vital question. It does not affect the life of the soul. That goes on, unimpeded by death.

We believe that when Christ expired upon the cross He went to the place of departed spirits. To those who trust Him it is
An inspiring belief. a cheering thought that "whithersoever the soul goes, thither the Lord has been." And not only has the Saviour been to the abode of souls, but many of our loved ones are now within its domain. This should encourage and strengthen us as we contemplate the time when we too shall lay aside the garment of flesh which we have worn in this world, and follow those who have already passed behind the veil. When they were parted from us we committed them to God. To Him we must also commit our own souls when the time of our departure shall come. But we have no reason either to doubt or fear. His promises are many and they never fail. He watches over those whom we call dead as truly as He does over those who have not died. There is both truth and comfort in

¹ L. T. Townsend, D. D., *Credo*.

the following beautiful lines regarding His care of our loved ones who have passed away : —

“ More home-like seems the vast unknown,
Since they have entered there ;
To follow them were not so hard,
Wherever they may fare ;
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore ;
Whate'er betides, Thy love abides,
Our God, for evermore.” ¹

The fact must not be overlooked that thus far we have insisted upon the possibility, and admitted the probability, that the soul does not go directly to its final home when it leaves the body. There are various reasons, some of which *From death to the resurrection.* have been stated, for believing that at death spirits “do not enter at once upon their ultimate mode of existence, or final destiny.” It seems to be more fully in accordance with both reason and revelation to suppose that they pass into a realm that is near at hand, and in which they remain until the resurrection and judgment.

During the period thus bounded the soul may not be destitute of form and organization, but the man will not be complete until the spirit is united to the body which it is to occupy through all the future of its existence. But whether it goes to an intermediate realm, or to the place of its eternal abode, its faculties will be unimpaired and abundant opportunities for the exercise and development of its powers will undoubtedly be provided. Wherever the place may be, it is under the dominion of God. It is a part of our Heavenly Father's house, and there His children will be content to dwell. In later chapters the location of the abodes of men after the judgment, and the final determination of destiny, will be incidentally considered.

¹ John White Chadwick, D. D., *Auld Lang Syne*.

CHAPTER XXIV

ENTERING THE NEW ABODE

IN the preceding pages we have presented what seems to be satisfactory evidence that when the soul is separated from the body its conscious life goes on, though the scene of its existence is transferred from this world to another realm. The new home of the soul, though to us invisible, is none the less real to its occupants than was the world from which they departed when they died. We are confident, too, that the realm which they have entered is fully adapted to meet the wants, and amply furnished to supply the needs, of each and all of its inhabitants.

Those who have reached the new abode have found that it is not an isolated place, but is one of the many closely connected, and perhaps interlacing, parts of the illimitable dominion of God. And those who still remain upon the earth need not fear that at death they shall be turned adrift in fathomless space, with no place of destination in view. As was the case with our predecessors, so it will, in these respects, be with ourselves. When we are called from earth a place will be in readiness for us, and we shall reach it without the slightest difficulty or danger. During our journey to the new abode we shall be under the same watchful care that is over us here and now. And when we enter the new home, we shall find that it has been amply furnished with whatever we shall need in the new conditions under which life will then go on.

The prospect which is thus opened to our view cannot fail to give us both courage and comfort as the time when we must cross the dividing line between the seen and the unseen worlds draws near. It does not, however, bring within the range of our vision all the details regarding which we would be glad to secure some definite information. In this world, when we start on a trip for business or pleasure we not only think of the character of the place to which we

are going, and the conditions of life which prevail therein, but we also consider the circumstances of the journey and the probable nature of the reception which awaits us at its end. It is natural and proper that we should do this. Much more should thought be given to the particulars of the journey which every human being is to take to the unseen world, and to the manner in which the traveler is to be received into what to him will be a new place of abode.

It is not mere curiosity which prompts us to wonder by what means the change of location will be effected; or whether the journey must be made alone; or how long a period, if any, will elapse between the latest recollection of earth and the first clear apprehension of the fact that the world has been left behind; or who will receive the new-comer, and what will be the method of his introduction to the home into which he will be ushered by death. Such topics as these are legitimate subjects of investigation. The man who never gives them a thought, or who regards them as of too little importance to deserve consideration, must be deeply engrossed in the things of the present world, or else he is living in a religious sphere that is much smaller than the one which it is his privilege to occupy.

We are obliged to admit that definite knowledge regarding the circumstances which attend the entrance of the soul into the unseen realm is limited. Its sources are few, and thus far the results of investigation have not been *Knowledge limited.* as full and decisive as have been desired by all, and expected by many who have been earnest and active in the search for information. But in recent years great advances have been made both in the apprehension of truth as revealed or intimated by the Scriptures, and in ascertaining and verifying certain principles of psychology which apply to the condition of the soul after it departs from its earthly home. Some points which formerly were in doubt have been settled, and others which were thought to be barely possible have come to be regarded as so nearly demonstrated as hardly to need to be qualified as probable.

So, while we do not have as much, or as direct, information as we desire, we are not left wholly in the dark as to what occurs when the soul makes its journey to the realm which either lies beyond the world with which life *Not wholly in the dark.* in the body has been associated, or which, if near at hand,

remains invisible until death lifts the veil which hides it from our eyes. There are analogies in the natural world which have a certain degree of value. Reason, too, finds a good deal of light upon this subject in contemplating the character of God, and in considering the methods by which many of His designs are known to be carried out. The experiences of the dying, as they linger for a moment on the dividing line of the two worlds, are not infrequently made known to those who are in attendance, and in many of these instances they have seemed to both explain the present and describe the immediate future of the departing soul. From the Scriptures, also, we obtain quite a good deal of light regarding the condition of the soul as it makes the exchange of worlds.

To a considerable extent this is an indirect method of securing the knowledge that is desired. This fact increases the liability of error which is inseparable from all human investigation. Yet, where direct evidence is meagre, this source of information is not to be ignored or despised. A great deal of our knowledge of the natural world is secured by this means. We reason from what we see and know to what our judgment assures us must result from the conditions and tendencies regarding which we have obtained certain information.

Scientists have long carried on their investigations in this manner, and the results which they have obtained have fully justified the method which they have employed. We cannot doubt that God desires that men shall use their mental powers in endeavoring to learn about the spiritual world as well as in obtaining knowledge of the things which pertain to the visible universe. Neither can we doubt that to the reverent student who is investigating matters pertaining to the spiritual realm He will grant wisdom as freely as He has given it in the past, and still continues to give it to those who seek to learn of Him and of His ways through the medium of His works in the natural world. Therefore, if we keep in mind the fact that we cannot state all of our conclusions in the language of absolute certainty, it will be both interesting and instructive to consider some of the points concerning which we have sufficient information to enable us to note what will in all probability occur as the soul leaves its earthly home and enters the world which, at least until the resurrection, is to be its place of abode.



MADONNA AND CHILD.

There is reason to suppose that a great many people are unduly alarmed at the prospect of death, because they have a mistaken idea of the nature of the change which it produces. That it is a great change, no one who *The nature of the change.* has given the matter the slightest consideration can doubt. But we should remember that the impression that is made upon the mind by any change depends a great deal more upon the nature of the change than it does upon the extent of the modification, or transformation, that results therefrom. In the ordinary course of events we observe many changes which at the first view seem to be of great importance, yet which are not nearly as far-reaching in their effects as are others which are so much less marked in their outward and immediate manifestations as to be at the time of their occurrence almost unnoticed.

Something of this kind may be affirmed in regard to the view which many people hold concerning death and the results which are due to its agency. From these people the facts of the complex nature of man and of the superiority of the spiritual element receive but little attention. The things that are seen make a much stronger impression upon their minds than do the things which are unseen. In other words, the physical nature rules the spiritual. The man who belongs to this class thinks of himself just as he appears to himself and to others. He understands that he is a living, moving, and intelligent being. But he does not seem to realize fully that it is not the body, but something that is within and is far superior to the body, which directs all of his efforts and guides him whenever and wherever he goes from any given place. It does not occur to him that he would still have all of this power and intelligence if he were separated from the body in which his real self now finds a home, and which he uses for the accomplishment of his purposes. So he seems to himself to be, so far as activity and energy are concerned, mainly a physical creature. The body is now so necessary to thought or action that he is at a loss to understand how he is ever going to be able to live and act intelligently without its assistance.

This idea, that while the man lives upon the earth he is a physical rather than a spiritual being, may not be very clearly defined. In many cases it certainly does not amount to a settled conviction. But too often, so far as the thought is formu-

lated at all, it follows this line of reasoning. The man is fully aware that death will make a great change in his condition. He expects that it will transform him into a spirit. He does not see just how this can be accomplished, but as he knows that the body must perish, it is plain to him that if any part of his being survives it must be the spiritual rather than the material.

Now this idea is very far from correct. Death has no power to change a physical being into a spiritual one. The man who expects to "become a spirit" when he dies is looking for a change which cannot be effected. He is a spirit now just as truly as he ever will be. He has a soul now just as truly as he has a body. It is possible that he has not developed his spiritual nature as fully as he has his physical frame. He may not think of his soul as often, or care for it as well, as he thinks and cares for his body. But this does not in the least modify the fact that the soul represents the real man.

Death has not the slightest power to turn the body into spirit. It merely separates the one from the other. The effects of this change reach on into the vast future which awaits the soul, but the change itself is very simple. If the soul has been neglected here, it will enter the unseen world in a dwarfed condition. If it has been cultivated here, it will begin its course under the new conditions upon a higher scale than the one upon which it would have been obliged to commence if its powers had been less fully developed while it remained in the body. Merely the place and state of the soul are changed. Its character remains the same. Whatever the soul is at the moment of death, that it will be when it enters its new home in the spirit world.

We have very strong reasons for believing that the exchange of worlds will not be made in a violent manner, but that it will be easy and pleasant. It is true that in the past many have held, and that there are still those who accept this theory, that the change of the soul from its home on earth to the full glory of heaven, or the utter darkness of hell, is instantaneous. Some of our familiar hymns teach this doctrine without reserve or qualification, and a good deal of the poetry upon this subject which is found outside of church hymnals conveys the same idea. The following verse, from a poem which in whole or in part has had a wide circulation in papers and in

A gentle transition.

poetical collections, is a good specimen of the class to which it belongs.

“ O change ! O wondrous change !
Burst are the prison bars —
This moment *there* so low,
So agonized, and now
Beyond the stars.”¹

This, though somewhat startling, is a very pretty sentiment, but there are reasons which lead us to believe that it is not an accurate description of the transit of the soul at death.

In the natural world transitions, or transformations, are usually gradual and gentle, and it is fully in accord with the general idea of “the fitness of things” that this should be the case. When such a change affects an extremely delicate, sensitive, and intelligent organization like the human soul, it is vastly more important that it should be quietly made than it is in the case of the lower orders of life. While we live here in the body we find that sudden changes are far from pleasant and that their effect upon the mental organization is often detrimental. For example, when one is sleeping soundly, a rude awakening may cause injurious effects which will remain for a long period. It is well known, too, that violent spiritual emotions, even those of the most exalted nature, may prove highly injurious, and that they sometimes overthrow the reason and leave the mind a wreck as long as it is connected with the brain through which, during this life, it must act if it acts at all.

It is true that we cannot affirm that results of the kind just noted would follow a violent change at the moment of death. Still, it is reasonable to suppose that it would be as harmful as it certainly would be unpleasant. And because it would be alarming and injurious it is not at all probable that such a change will be experienced. In this great moment of death God does not desert His creatures. In the time of their helplessness He will not leave them to suffer from real or imaginary ills, or for want of needed assistance. The man who has served God here will doubtless enter quietly, and with serene confidence, into the new conditions of his life. To those who have made a failure of the present life these conditions will present a very different aspect from what they do to those who have lived aright. Still, we do not think it probable that the appalling

¹ Caroline Bowles, *Death of a Pauper*.

horrors which some have asserted must attend the entrance of such souls into the unseen world will, at that moment, be realized. The time for the full manifestation of the displeasure of God, and of the full realization of its own deserts by the unrepentant soul, has not then arrived.

Then, too, from the manner in which we came into this world we may infer that there will be nothing violent or alarming in our entrance into the unseen realm. When we entered the earthly life we were utterly helpless. But ample preparations had been made for our coming and for our care after our conscious existence commenced. The dawn of consciousness was quiet and gradual. The life that was begun in weakness gradually gained in strength, and the period of helpless infancy soon passed by.

When we enter the spiritual home it will be just as new to us as was the home in this world which we entered at birth. We shall carry with us whatever knowledge we have acquired here, and shall doubtless be able to glide quickly and naturally into the new state of being. Yet, at the first, we shall be comparatively helpless. This should not cause us the slightest alarm or distress. We may be sure that the God who so ordered events that whatever was necessary for our comfort and well-being when we came into this world was promptly supplied will amply provide for our needs as the conditions of life are changed and we become inhabitants of the world which, though clearly perceived by the eye of faith, lies beyond the range of our earthly vision.

It has been a very prevalent idea that, so far as our human relationships are concerned, we die entirely alone. A good deal of rather depressing poetry, and perhaps a still larger quantity of equally disheartening prose, has been written to assure us that no relative or friend can bear us company through the river of death. To all the other unpleasant features of departure from the world the writers of this class of literature add the absolute separation of the soul from every human being.

If we look only upon the surface, this view appears to accord with the facts which are plain to every observer of what occurs at death. We watch over our dying ones with anxious care, and do all that it is possible for us to do to minister to their comfort.

*Not a lonely
journey.*

But as the current of their life ebbs away we come to a point beyond which we cannot proceed. They silently glide away from us into the realm regarding which our physical senses can give us no information. We cannot keep them with us; we are equally unable to go with them. How long they are conscious of our presence we cannot tell. Whether their powers of spiritual perception are so elevated that, up to the very instant of departure, they know that we are near them, we are not able to determine. But it is not impossible that they are fully conscious of all that occurs around them until the spirit is fully set free from the body and commences the journey to its future home.

Thus far the theory that the soul enters the new state of being alone is sustained. Those whom we call the living do not go to the end of the journey with those who die. If the departing soul has faith in God, and has lived in accordance with the truth which has been revealed to it, or even if in the last instant of its earthly existence it makes a decisive choice of the right, we are assured that it will be cheered and strengthened by One who has passed through this experience of death, but who has been victorious in the conflict, and is "alive for evermore." This is infinitely more sustaining and comforting to the departing spirit than any, or all, earthly companionship could be. And yet it is only natural that the dying should long for some relative or friend who had been dear to him in this world to accompany him as he enters the spirit land.

The fact that friends from earth do not go with those who die has led to the conclusion that, so far as humanity is concerned, they go away from us alone. But we are not shut up to this conclusion. If we look deeper into the subject we shall see that there are facts which justify a very different opinion.

We need to keep in mind the fact that our departed friends are still human beings. They have not become angels. They have not been transformed into any other order of intelligences. They are, and will continue to be, the same persons that they were while they were with us here. Doubtless they are changing even as we change while we are in the body. Stagnation would mean both a lack of progress and a certainty of decay. But the change that the soul experiences is not an alteration of its nature. Whatever was human here will be human as long as it continues in existence.

Another fact of which we must not lose sight is that God is always good to His children and that He is constantly interested in their welfare. To our feeble sight this does not always appear to be true. Sometimes God seems to forget His children, but this is because the range of our vision is limited. If we could see, as He does, what is to be the outcome of the discipline through which we are called to pass we should have neither fear nor regret. He is our Father, and when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" He will care for us with all the tenderness that our needs require.

As our friends in the other world retain their consciousness and their personal identity, and as the loving care of God is over every soul of man, it is not impossible that the natural longing for human companionship in the time of death may be granted. Some of the American Indians have a belief that when a soul leaves the body "it is met with great rejoicing by the others who died previously." And among many peoples, and in many and in widely separated times and regions, an idea that in their journey from this world the dying are attended by inhabitants from the realm to which they are on their way has extensively prevailed.

In comparatively recent times a belief that the dying are watched over by their deceased relatives or friends, who minister to their needs and act as their guides to the new home, has been accepted by a large number of the people of civilized lands. Spiritualists are very pronounced in this view, and it is firmly held by individual members of many denominations of Christians. The doctrine, however, is neither distinctively Spiritualistic nor Christian. While it is held by large numbers of people who could not be classed with either of these bodies, it is rejected by many Christians. Doubtless many who have rejected it, without investigation, have done so largely because it seemed to be a product of Spiritualism. This course, even for the most devout Christian, is neither necessary nor wise. The particular theory in question can be accepted without indorsing any of the other views of the life and condition of the departed soul which are set forth by Spiritualists. Besides, any theory that has the appearance of truth is worthy of consideration, even if it is held by people with whose principal religious doctrines we cannot agree. And this theory is reasonable. It is in

*Friends on the
other side.*

accordance with our natural instincts. It appeals to reason as well as to desire. And, as far as we can see, it does not antagonize the Scriptures in the least.

Not only does it seem desirable and natural that such should be the case, but there have been a great number of instances in which the appearance, or the words, of the dying have justified, or even compelled, a belief that the spirits of dear ones who, perhaps long before, had departed to the unseen realm, were with them in the moment of death. It is certain that as they have drawn very near the close of the earthly life many of these persons have been vividly conscious of some presence which was not apparent to any one but themselves. Often this has been interpreted as a sign that Christ was revealing Himself to a faithful disciple. But in many cases this manifestation, inexpressibly blessed and comforting as it must be, was not all of which the dying one was aware. To some the light of peace and joy has come after the earthly sense of sight has failed but before the power of speech has been lost, and they have clearly stated their belief that some relative or friend from the other side of the line which separates the seen from the unseen was hovering near. A great number of instances have been known in which the dying person, at the instant of departure, has pronounced the name, and has seemed either to see or feel the presence, of a dear one who had died long before. It certainly is possible, we believe it to be probable, that "the affections, which alone of earthly things can survive dissolution will, like magnets, draw the beloved and loving spirits of the dead around the dying." Thus, "in dying we may meet, and *meet at once*, before we have had a moment to feel the loneliness of death," the souls of the departed whom we have loved on earth.¹

Just how the journey to the new realm will be made we are unable to tell. Whether, when it is set free from the body, the soul will have powers of its own which will enable it to pass through space without assistance is a problem for which we have no means of solution. Some have believed that this will be the case. Others think that the spirits of departed friends are with the dying to render assistance as well as comfort. One of our popular hymns teaches that the departing soul is to be "borne on angels' wings," and there are

*The home soon
reached.*

¹ Frances Power Cobbe, *The Peak in Darien*.

various other views which have found favor with some who do not accept either of those which have been stated. But, whatever the mode may be, we can rest assured that it will not be unpleasant. In all probability the journey will neither be dreary nor long.

There are good reasons for supposing that we shall enter the new life without reluctance. It is a law of nature that transitions from a lower to a higher plane are without pain. And to the good man death is in the nature of an uplift. It is in the line of progress. Indeed, when the body becomes very old there can be no progress without its intervention. The change which it causes is for the betterment of the soul. Probably this is apparent at the instant of death. It will certainly be apprehended as the other world is reached.

From the nature of the case it is certain that a great many persons will be surprised as the character and conditions of the new life are made known to them. One of these surprises will relate to the soul itself and will be met at the very threshold of the unseen home. In the experience of death the soul will gain new, and in many cases entirely unexpected, knowledge of its character. To some this will be a source of joy. It will show them that the spiritual conflicts in which they engaged while upon earth have not all been lost. In other cases it will remove the veil of almost unconscious deception which has hidden the soul from itself while it remained in the body. And there are not a few whom it will awake from an indifference which for many years has prevented the soul from attending to its most pressing needs. Probably to every one there comes, at this great moment in his history, a degree of spiritual enlightenment which it never before had received. But in the cases of all who have really endeavored to serve God, even though they may have followed "afar off" and "made many crooked paths," it is probable that, mingled with the surprise which a review of their lives that is instant and yet minute must evoke, there will be a great moral advance.

Then, too, a great many persons will be surprised at the location of the new home, the way in which life goes on, and the general condition of the inhabitants of the spiritual realm. The views which are now accepted are so widely diverse that all cannot be true. Not that dissimilarity is impossible or improbable.

It is as certain as anything can be. But it will not be carried to the extent of admitting anything that is detrimental to a far higher spiritual existence than that of earth.

As it is not to be supposed that we are all going to be made over at death, and conformed to a single pattern, something of the same diversity which we here observe will be seen in the world beyond. Though we cannot speak with certainty as to details, we know that God has infinite resources and that He will provide whatever is required to make His faithful children happy. And, while tastes will differ widely, such arrangements will be made, at least among the good, that what promotes the happiness of one will not interfere with the pleasure of another.

Upon this matter of enjoyment in the future life we shall have more to say when we consider the probable condition of the soul in the home which it is to occupy after it has been united to the body at the resurrection, and the results of a judicial inquiry concerning its deserts has been declared. We believe that after the judgment the soul may find another home than the one which it had previously occupied, and that the conditions of life will be greatly changed.

Whatever the method of our transference from this world to the other may be, and whoever may accompany the soul in its transit, we are justified in believing that as we enter the new home we shall be greeted by relatives and friends who have preceded us there. We shall not go into the new home as strangers and be obliged to become acquainted with the inmates before we find friends. We shall need companionship, and probably advice and assistance. In this world means are used for the accomplishment of purposes. Doubtless the same law will prevail hereafter. And it is perfectly natural to suppose that friends who aided us here will, if they precede us to the spirit world, be our helpers there. "It is more than probable that the departed, upon their entrance into the future life, will meet those who will be guides and supports, will be all that earthly mothers have been; and to many the same mother, gone before, will once more be present to take them by the hand and direct them forward in the new life."¹

Perhaps the idea that as they reach the confines of the new abode souls will be met by loved ones who have gone before,

¹ Dr. J. R. Nichols, *Whence, What, Where?*

was never more beautifully expressed than in the following lines which form the closing verse of a poem written many years ago by Mr. R. Huie, on the death of his young son : —

“ My little one, my fair one, thou canst not come to me,
But nearer draws the numbered hour when I shall go to thee ;
And thou, perchance, with seraph smile, and golden harp in hand,
Mayst come the first to welcome me to our Emmanuel’s land.”

While there will be much to cheer the soul as it goes into its new home, it is not probable that vast revelations will be made to it at the first. The full glories of the new world will not burst at once upon the spiritual vision. Much will be made known, but far more will be held in reserve. There, as here, knowledge will be progressive. At the first we shall “know in part,” but we shall find many things which we do not understand, and which will awaken our curiosity and attract our serious attention. There will be much to learn, and the field of inquiry will constantly enlarge as we make progress therein. But we shall be deeply interested, and, as the mind will probably be much more free and active than it was while it was connected with the physical body, it is to be expected that we shall learn far more rapidly than it was possible for us to do while we were upon the earth.

The followers of Swedenborg have very peculiar views in regard to the entrance of the soul into its new home by means of death. While we can only regard these ideas as a strange mixture of truth and error, they are very interesting, and they certainly deserve attention in any thorough consideration of the great subject of the condition of the soul after it leaves the body. It is also true that with but slight modification these views are accepted by many who do not closely follow Swedenborg as regards other portions of his system of theology.

According to the doctrines of this church, the man who has died “has simply passed from one province of the universe to another. This transition has been effected by his removal from the material body. It was not a passage through space, as we go from one country to another. He was in the spiritual world while he dwelt in the material body, though unconscious of it. The change consisted simply in casting aside the material body, which is the instrumental means by which man lives in the

material world, while it also acts as a veil to the spiritual senses, and prevents all consciousness of the presence and influence of spiritual beings and spiritual objects.”¹ This new province, though not material, so closely resembles the earth, and the man himself is so little changed, either in appearance or in mental or spiritual condition, that it is somewhat difficult for him to realize at once that he has really died.

We believe the view of Swedenborgians in regard to the exchange of worlds at death is fairly stated in a story or “tale of the life to come,” in which the narrator treats the subject as a matter of personal experience. From this book we glean the following points:² At death the soul slowly, but without excitement or alarm, becomes unconscious. But the shadow is only temporary. There is a gradual awakening to conscious existence. Even before sight returns there is a feeling of joy and peace which continues for what seems to be a long time. There is a sound of sweet music, and the air is filled with a delightful perfume. The presence of other beings is felt. Sight gradually returns. At length a voice is heard, or a suggestion takes definite form in the mind, requesting the now rapidly reviving soul to put on its robes and then pass out and join those who have been keeping it company. Upon fully recovering his senses, the one who has died finds himself in a room similar to the one which he had occupied during his illness, with all of its furnishings undisturbed. He is in bodily form, and finds suitable clothing upon a chair near the couch upon which he is lying. He dresses himself, passes through the house without finding any one, and then goes out of doors. Everything that he sees closely resembles the home and surroundings with which he was familiar while he lived upon earth, and yet he observes marked differences. The feeling of uneasiness caused by this succession of mysteries is quickly dispelled by the appearance of a man of noble presence, who greets him cordially, and informs him that the experience of death has been passed through, and that instead of being upon earth he has reached the “vast entrance-court of the spiritual world where all come immediately after death.”

Upon the subject now under consideration, Spiritualists have

¹ Rev. Chauncey Giles, in *That Unknown Country*.

² Louis Pendleton, *The Wedding Garment*.

spoken and written a great deal more than have the members of any other organization. But, as is the case with other bodies, the views of its members vary greatly. *Some Spiritualistic views.* It is hardly necessary to say that with the opinions of the very large class of adherents to this system who reject the Bible, we have no sympathy whatever. We believe that many of these people are deluded, and that not a few are unmitigated frauds. But there is another class of Spiritualists who believe the Scriptures and who earnestly endeavor to follow their teachings. Though we cannot resist the conviction that upon some points they are in error, we believe that they are thoroughly honest in their opinions, and that their views are entitled to a respectful consideration. So far as the Scriptures are concerned, it is not, as it is in the case of the other class of Spiritualists, a question of conflict with the Bible, but one of interpretation of many of its statements and implications.

The following quotations, from selections which were made by one of the leaders of the body which he represented, and which were published in a Spiritualistic book,¹ will give a good idea of the general tenor of the views of that type of Spiritualists who honor the teachings of the Scriptures, and who insist upon purity of life and nobility of character.

An inquiry of the spirit of a brother who had died some time before, regarding the nature of death and the sensations which were experienced as the new life was entered, was answered as follows: "The dread and fearful uncertainty which pervade the minds of most men about to undergo the change is what constitutes death. It in reality is but a passing away from the things of earth to a blissful abode in the blessed spirit-home, as though you should go to sleep some night in a desert place, and on awakening at morn find yourself in the most beautiful abode which your imagination can picture. It is an imperceptible breathing-forth of the spirit from the earthly body by which it is enwrapped. . . . When I awoke in the spirit-life, and perceived I had hands and feet and all that belongs to the human body, I cannot express to you in form of words the feelings which at that moment seemed to take possession of my soul. I realized that I had a body — a spiritual body; and with what beautiful and glorious effulgence of light did I remember what Paul

¹ J. R. Francis, *The Encyclopedia of Death*.

stated in his epistle: 'It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.' I realized at that moment, as I had never done before, the glorious truth of my own unfoldings."

From a discourse, said to have been "suggested in thought and language" by the spirit of an eminent author, we quote as follows: "To find one's self floating out from the fastnesses of time into the immeasurable space of eternity is such a matchless experience that only those who pass through the portal of death can understand. . . . Coming toward me, space seemed to be filled with all I had hoped and prophesied; and in the very antechamber which I entered immediately after death I could see so much of eternity that it would take the mortal breath away, as it almost did the breath of the spirit. There was no low, dim twilight. There was no simple fading of existence and inanition. There was no uncertainty. There was no bewilderment. There was no pausing, as if in sleep, upon the threshold of that immortal side, while tender hands would prepare, as they sometimes do, the immortal state. Suddenly, and with full power, I sprang upright, and was aware immediately of being a form — a being whose intensity pervaded and thrilled me, until I seemed a part of the universe around. . . . Death gives back every blessed and good promise of life, but it will not relieve you from responsibilities. These are yours; you inherit them. They belong to you as part of the infinite plan; and sooner or later, in one world or another, in one state of being or another, you must meet and vanquish them."

We quote from the author last represented because of his views in respect to the uplifting of the soul at the instant of death, and also on account of his making clear the fact, which too many people either do not recognize or do not believe, that the conditions under which men enter the new state of existence will depend upon the characters which they have formed on earth. A man "who is accustomed to think of a future state," and who strives to live in accordance with the principles of truth and justice, will be more intelligent, be much stronger, and consequently will need less help from others, as he seeks his place in the realm which he enters at death, than will one who has confined his attention to earthly things and lived without any special regard to the hereafter. Sin, either of omission or commission, may be forgiven, and punishment may be remitted, but

even then the consequences of good or evil doing cannot be wholly confined to the existence which lies on this side of the grave.

It is believed that we have found sufficient evidence to justify the expectation that as we pass from life here to the state of existence beyond, we shall be fully conscious of our *Reasonable expectations.* surroundings and of the changes in our circumstances and conditions which are then taking place. If there is, as some believe, a lapse into unconsciousness at the moment of transit, it will be very brief. Unless it be on account of moral unfitness to enter the spiritual world, there will be no alarm and no unpleasant excitement. There will be a strong feeling of expectation, mingled with curiosity concerning the character of the world which is coming into view, but this will doubtless be a pleasant rather than a disquieting sensation.

The change through which men pass at death is destructive only to the body. The real man is not harmed. The mind does not suffer in the least. There is reason to believe that its powers will be quickened, and that hitherto dormant faculties will come into active use. The spiritual nature, too, receives a powerful impulse. There is no loss of the idea of personality, no lapse of memory which will cause the man to forget who and where he is. Life becomes fuller and richer as the soul is set free from its earthly tenement. The man who has lived well can neither be defeated nor imperiled by death. For him, separation from the body is an infallible witness to the victorious progress of the soul.

The dying do not enter the unseen world alone. Friends who have preceded them, angels, or other messengers of God, are undoubtedly at hand whenever and wherever a human being is passing through the change of death. The departing soul is aware of the presence of friendly guides, and has a full assurance that it will not be deserted or neglected in the time of its need.

In the new realm there will be many things which at first the soul will not be able to comprehend. But that thought need cause no more anxiety than we are subject to here when we think of the multitude of things connected with our common affairs which we are not able to understand. As it gains in experience the soul will increase in knowledge, and its powers will be developed by the training which it will receive under

conditions which are far more favorable to its progress than were those which it had while on earth.

There are many other matters in connection with the entrance of the soul into the new life which might be considered, but upon which it does not seem desirable to dwell. We hope and believe that, in some minds at least, what has been said upon this subject will lessen the dread of death which in the past has caused an undue degree of apprehension. But whether the conclusions at which we have arrived are accepted or not, every child of God may rest in confidence upon the fact that when the soul departs from its earthly tabernacle it does not go beyond the love and care of Him who created it, and who most earnestly desires its purest happiness and its highest good.

CHAPTER XXV

THE RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS

PROBABLY every man, as he has stood by the grave of a relative or a friend, or has learned that one with whom he had been connected by ties of kindred or affection has departed this life, has asked himself, over and over again, whether the separation which has been made by death is to be continued forever. The question involves more than the mere continuance of existence beyond the grave. It is not simply a question whether our departed friends are now alive, or whether we, too, shall be alive after we pass through the change called death, but above and beyond the matter of mere existence it has to do with the powers of the soul after it leaves the body and with the conditions of its life in the new abode.

In previous chapters we have endeavored to show that conscious life goes on regardless of the incident of death. If the conclusions we have reached are correct, our departed friends are now living and are fully conscious of their being and their surroundings. When we have crossed the dividing line between the seen and the unseen worlds the same can be said by others regarding ourselves. It is a great comfort for those who remain upon earth to feel that their kindred and friends, who have gone into the land which, though perhaps very near, yet lies beyond the range of our earthly vision, are alive, and to believe that such will be our own condition after we die, but we long for some assurance that there will be recognition and reunion of those who were dear to each other here.

So far as the present world is concerned, the great majority of men believe that death effects an utter separation. When the parent, or child, or friend is removed by death, the mourners have no hope of seeing the departed one again. They believe that the last farewells of earth have been said. But numerous questions regarding the carrying over of the affections into the world beyond will continue to

*Separation of
friends by death.*

Life goes on.

*Important and
interesting ques-
tions.*



A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST.

come into their minds. Those who have been bereaved will not cease to ask whether the last word spoken here must forever remain the final word. We remember, with a deeper and a sanctified love, those who have gone. We cannot help asking whether death has sundered the ties of their affection and destroyed their powers of recognition. Will death, when it comes to ourselves, take us to a place in which we shall neither know those who have preceded us nor be known by them? Will husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters and friends, the strength of whose love was measured only by the capacities of their natures, be separated forever, or meet only as strangers in the realms to which they go? Or will there be a recognition of relatives and friends in the land of departed souls and a closer and an eternal union of the affections which hold so large a place in the earthly life?

Questions of this kind are common to all men, for all are mourners, and all are going to the world which has been prepared as a dwelling-place for souls. We have a right to ask them and to seek by all the legitimate means in our power to find their answers. Indeed, this right seems to rise to the height of duty. For no one who refuses to consider them can be true to the memory of his departed kindred and friends, or to his own higher nature. These questions are interwoven with all that is best in human life, and their consideration may be made of great benefit. And of all the themes connected with the future life there can, as one of our able writers has said, "scarcely be one of more thrilling interest."

As the subject of the recognition of friends after death has been one of general interest, so the belief that there would be such recognition has been very common. It is not, as many have seemed to suppose, a distinctively *A common belief.* Christian doctrine, though vast numbers of Christians, representing many denominations, accept it, but "it is, and has been, in some form the common heritage of humanity."¹ But, while Christianity did not originate this hope, it has changed what was a desire and a longing into a practical certainty. Traces of this longing are found in the early history of the race.

"It is an old belief that on *some* solemn shore
Beyond the sphere of grief dear friends will meet once more."

¹ Bishop Randolph S. Foster, *Beyond the Grave*.

In the earliest history of the race we find evidence that some of the greatest men of their time hoped for a reunion with relatives after death. Among the many promises which God made to Abraham was the following: "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace;" and when he died it was said that he was "gathered to his people." In recording the death of Isaac, the sacred historian, with the exception of "unto" in place of "to," uses the same words. As Jacob was about to depart this life he called his sons around him, gave them his blessing, and added: "I am to be gathered unto my people." He gave directions for his burial, and as he ceased speaking "yielded up the ghost and was gathered unto his people." In these and similar Scripture passages it is evident that something of far greater significance than the burial of the body near the bodies of relatives was noted. In some cases the latter was mentioned as subordinate, but in others, as in those of Abraham and Moses, it is plain that it was not taken into the account. Their burial-places were far removed from those of their ancestors. It is safe to say that in all cases in which terms of this kind are used in reference to such characters as have been named, they denote a reunion of spirits rather than a common place for burial.

If we turn to other records and other races we find the same desire, perhaps differently expressed but no less carefully cherished. Some of the ancient peoples of the East are represented as saying that "to re-behold our parents and our children" was regarded as one of the greatest pleasures of the future life. In various parts of the world, people whose mental powers had been but slightly developed have had the idea that the acquaintances and friends of this world would, in the life which they pictured beyond the grave, continue to hold the same relationship. There were many peoples, too, who offered human sacrifices when one of their rulers, or noted characters, died. This was partly in order that these men to whom they had been accustomed to render homage might have servants to do their bidding, as had been the case in this world; but even this involved the idea of the recognition of departed spirits. But there were many cases in which the wife, and people of higher rank than servants, were slain. In such instances the idea of companionship must have been prominently in mind. Among some tribes the pet dog of a deceased Indian was killed upon the grave of its former owner.

Sometimes circumstances indicated that the dog was slain not so much for the purpose of assisting his former master in the hunt as in order to be company for him in the new life. People of a higher mental development have sent messages to friends in the spirit world by those who were about to commit suicide or who were drawing near to death by illness.

The great scholars of Greece and Rome were not all agreed as to the probability of a life beyond this world, though many of them were believers in the doctrine that conscious life persists. But with whatever degree of faith they possessed in the future life they linked the belief that there would be a full recognition of those who had been their acquaintances and friends, or of whom they had heard and in whom they had become interested in this world. Sometimes the hope of meeting with the good and great appears to have been the principal reason for the desire that death should not end existence. Knowing, as they did, but very little of the true God, it is not strange that at times their faith was weak. Neither is it a matter for surprise that their views of the life beyond were different from those which are now generally entertained by people of cultivated mental powers. But it is worthy of note that, in common with greatly inferior peoples and even with savage races, among these poets and philosophers and wise men of the ancient world, there were many who lived and died in the hope, if not in the full belief, that death does not forever separate friends.

Since the coming of Christ into the world, there has been a far stronger and a rapidly increasing belief that the separation of relatives and friends by death is only temporary. This is due, in a great measure, to the fact that His teaching, and death, and His subsequent appearance in a manner that made it impossible to doubt that He had really died and had risen from the dead, caused the doctrine of a future life to be widely disseminated and to be held with a degree of tenacity which it had never before exhibited. And this doctrine that man lives beyond the grave was presented in such a manner as to carry with it, by implication that was perhaps as strong as direct assertion would have been, the idea that those who have been acquainted on earth will know each other after they have passed through the change of death.

The fact that the hope of a future recognition of friends has

been held by so many different people, by races who were widely separated as to locality, and by men of the least as well as by those of the greatest mental development, is strong evidence that the hope is to be realized. In seeking for evidence of the existence of God, or of the immortality of the soul, it is common, and is proper, to lay a great deal of stress upon the fact that these ideas have been prevalent in all ages and among all peoples. So here the general and intuitive idea that friends will meet and know each other after death is to be accepted, not as proof, but as a strong probability that it is true. The universal longing tells of a deep and constant want of the human soul, and its universality and persistence may well be regarded as a prophetic indication that the desire will be gratified.

From the very nature of the case this doctrine of the recognition of friends after death must rest upon faith rather than upon absolute proof. There is a great deal of indirect evidence in its favor, enough we claim to place it far beyond a reasonable doubt, and yet we have to admit that the direct and unqualified proof that would come from personal experience is wanting. Spiritualists, and people who belong to a few other organizations, believe that there are persons who are so endowed that they can freely converse with the souls of the departed and can thus learn of the character of the life which continues beyond this world. Some have even professed to be able to look into the realm which to most of their companions is unseen, and to observe the condition of the people and things therein. But in these cases there is need of a strong faith in the so-called "medium," and in many of them there is danger of misapprehension on the part of both the receiver of the message and the one through whose agency it purports to come. It is well known, too, that, according to the testimony of a large number of the mediums themselves, fraud has often been practiced in a most heartless manner upon men and women who, in the agony of their bereavement, have endeavored to learn something regarding the place and condition of those who had been removed by death. We do not assert that the inhabitants of the spiritual realm have no influence whatever upon mankind. Of this matter we shall have more to say in another chapter. But we do not think that the doctrine that those who were friends on earth will be friends elsewhere either

requires or can be strengthened by an appeal to what is known as modern Spiritualism, or to any belief of a similar character.

Assuming for the present that we shall know each other in the world to which God calls us at death just as truly and clearly as we did while we lived on earth, there will be in many minds question as to the manner in which *How recognition will be possible.* this will be accomplished. It is asserted that in the spiritual world we shall be disembodied. If that is really the case it will present a difficulty with which we do not have to contend in this world. Friends who have been for many years separated, and who in the mean time have changed greatly in their appearance, sometimes meet unexpectedly and recognize each other by the tones of the voice or by some peculiar yet habitual act which memory at once connects with a single one out of hundreds of acquaintances. But when these friends become inhabitants of the spiritual world it is said that they will be deprived of bodily form and will have no means of communicating with each other even if they most earnestly desire to do so.

The difficulty thus suggested is not as great as it appears. To begin with, we do not know that the soul is wholly disembodied in the period between death and the resurrection. There are very strong reasons for supposing that this is not the case. The body that it has used in this world has been laid aside, it is true. But this does not prove that the soul must remain "unclothed" until the resurrection body is assumed. As will be shown farther on, it is both possible and probable that some form of a body, or a covering, that is adapted to the needs of the soul during this intermediate time and state of its existence, will be supplied.

There are other ways out of the difficulty. We do not know that embodiment is necessary for communication in the spiritual world. Here the spirit acts through and by means of the body. But the action is not always perfect. We do not recognize all the qualities of our friends. They, in turn, do not know us completely. Perhaps when the body is left behind the power of the soul to know others, and also to know itself, will be greatly increased. It may be, too, that the soul is possessed of dormant or only partially awakened powers, and that these will come into active exercise when it leaves the body. There are many other ways in which the power of recognition can be attained. God

is not limited as to ways or means. And as we believe that His Word teaches, indirectly but certainly, the doctrine of recognition in the future life, we are not greatly concerned as to how this purpose is accomplished.

From a recent writer upon this and kindred themes we quote as follows: "It will be instinctive recognition, in which no mistake can be made, a sixth divine sense, perhaps, of which we have a faint hint in the shiver of joy or repulsion which comes over us upon a first introduction to strangers in this world."¹ This is a reasonable explanation of the way in which friends will know one another under conditions which must be widely different from those of the present life.

Then there comes another matter concerning which every one who is looking forward to a meeting with departed friends desires information. This has reference to the time *When recognition will occur.* at which this recognition will occur. Some able men, particularly in early times, have thought that it would be delayed until after the resurrection. They held that in the interval between the loss of the body here and its resumption at the last day, the soul would be without an organization and, consequently, would be unable to communicate with any other soul. This, as we have already shown, is neither necessarily nor probably true. The probabilities are almost wholly in the other direction. The idea that those who were dear to each other for the period of an ordinary lifetime upon the earth will pass into another state of existence which will continue for ages, remain all this while entire strangers, and then, when a new era opens, and the souls receive the bodies of which they had been deprived at death, they will renew the acquaintance and friendship of earth, does not appear reasonable, and is opposed to what we believe to be the teaching of the Scriptures. It is to be noted, too, that this idea of souls remaining in conscious existence, yet as entire strangers, for ages, and then renewing a friendship which had been interrupted by death, is just as unreasonable if we think that at death these souls go to their final state and place as it is if we believe that they then pass into an intermediate realm. It does not help the matter in the least to suppose that friends are in heaven if there is to be no recognition until the resurrection. They are just as widely and completely

¹ Beverley E. Warner, D. D., *The Facts and the Faith*.

separated there as they would be in an intermediate world. In either case, if they cannot recognize each other they are practically dead so far as friendly relations are concerned. This means that the powers of the soul are greatly diminished by death. And, if diminished in this way, they may be lessened along various other lines, so that, instead of being a period of growth and development, the vast interval which, in the case of countless millions of souls, must elapse between their departure from this world and the assuming of their resurrection bodies, must be one of a very limited and meagre existence. It certainly is not reasonable to believe that God should give the soul such wonderful powers and such vast capacities as those with which He has endowed it here upon earth, allow it to develop its faculties for the brief period of a human life in this world, and then place it for ages under conditions which will prevent further progress in some, and perhaps in many, of the directions in which its pure and noble qualities have been greatly advanced. Neither is it in accordance with the great law of progress which seems to govern the affairs of the universe.

Social intercourse is one of the great means of helpfulness and development in this world. We believe that it will be the same in the world to come. If we are to be there the same persons that we are here, which is certain to be the case if we have any real existence, the same means, though perhaps improved in method and increased in efficiency, will probably be employed for our education and progress. We believe that the period that follows death is to be one of great spiritual development and that the friends who loved us and helped us here will know us and be our teachers and our guides after the earthly conditions have passed away. And as it is probable that when we enter the new life we shall need help and encouragement as much as at any time of our existence in the state which we shall then enter, we have no doubt that friends will be waiting for our coming, and will greet us with all of their old-time affection, as we enter the world beyond. Perhaps the one who was dearest of all to us upon earth may come, even before we are entirely freed from the body which we leave at death, to guide us on the way. If not, we can rest assured that some being from the spirit world will bear us company, and that we shall not be lonely for a moment after we leave the tabernacle of flesh.

We think it has been shown beyond all reasonable doubt that death does not affect the conscious existence of the soul. The conditions are greatly changed, but life goes on. *Personal identity involves recognition.* The man who lives after death is the same man as he was before he died. The absence of his body in no wise affects his identity. It no more makes another and a different man of him than does the changing of his clothing while he is in this world. What he wears has nothing whatever to do with his personality. So will it be in the world to come. Whether the soul is supplied with some bodily form as it enters the new conditions, or gradually assumes an organization as its powers are developed, or remains without a visible form until the resurrection, the man will not lose his identity for a single moment.

Now if we remain the same persons after death that we are when we die we shall know the people with whom we are acquainted here. In this world we are what we are very largely on account of our intercourse with others. This is a scriptural doctrine as well as a principle in philosophy and a matter of common observation. The Bible has numerous warnings against going in the way of evil men. Parents and teachers warn the young against bad company, and a very large proportion of the inmates of our prisons and reformatory institutions can trace their entrance into wicked courses to the influence of evil companions. On the other hand, it is equally well known that intercourse with the wise and the good is one of the strongest incentives to virtue and one of the greatest aids in securing the formation and the stability of a noble character. In the work of character building we take from others and also impart to them. There is a great truth expressed in the oft quoted line, —

“I am a part of all that I have met.”

This is in full accordance with the assertion of the Apostle Paul that “none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself.” No one does or can exist entirely by himself in the unseen world any more than he can live independently of others here. This because spiritual laws are universal and unchangeable. A loss of the knowledge of what others have been to us would be virtually a loss of a part of ourselves. If they do not remember and are not able to recognize their earthly friends, the men and

women who enter the new conditions become other men and women than they were in this life. If the idea of the recognition of friends is rejected, the doctrine of the absolutely permanent personal identity of the soul cannot be maintained.

As has already been shown, we have reason to suppose that the physical frame acts as a weight or clog upon the spirit, and that when it is set free from its earthly tabernacle the powers of the soul which have been manifested through the body here will be greatly increased in strength. It is highly probable that there will also be a manifestation of powers of the existence of which we are not as yet aware. The capacities of being will be wonderfully increased and the sphere of knowledge will be immeasurably enlarged.

Here, with all of the limitations of the body, and of the earthly surroundings, we know our friends, not perfectly it is true, yet in many cases there is a very intimate acquaintance. It is incredible that death will cause us to lose all of this knowledge unless it also deprives us of conscious existence, — a supposition which we cannot for a moment entertain. Common sense, and philosophy, and religion, so far as they throw any light upon the subject, indicate that we shall, at the very least, know as much in the next world as we know here. Whether we desire to do so or not, we shall be obliged to enter the new realm with the characters which we have formed and the knowledge which we have obtained while we dwelt upon the earth. This being the case, justice will require that we come in contact with those who have influenced us, or whom we have influenced either for good or for evil, and personal recognition will follow as a matter of course.

There are various moral and spiritual ends which appear, even to the keenest intellect and to the most enlightened conscience, to be of incalculable importance, but which cannot be secured without a recognition of friends in the future life. While we abide upon the earth we are enveloped in mysteries. Of these, many belong to the physical world. They appeal principally to our intellects and will be duly considered at a later stage of the inquiry with which we are now concerned. But there is another and an altogether different class of mysteries with which every intelligent and thoughtful man is still more profoundly impressed. They also present intellectual

*A common-sense
view.*

*From a moral
point of view.*

problems, but to a far greater extent they have to do with the relations of the soul to God, to itself, and to the souls of those with whom it had been in some way connected in the earthly life.

Among these mysteries which constantly surround us, yet for which no adequate explanation in the present state of being seems possible, are the many providences which
Frequent defeat of the right. appear to be tending constantly and powerfully toward the subversion of the right and the establishment of the wrong. In numberless instances the vicious man has prosperity for his lifelong companion while the godly man is constantly on the most intimate terms with adversity. In many cases the wicked cause triumphs over the good. Money and influence often defeat the ends of justice. Not infrequently the innocent suffer and the guilty escape. Wherever there is a public sentiment that in the main condemns wrongdoing there will be found frequent cases in which justice miscarries and the wrong wins the day. The men who are for the right are often defeated by fraud, and are sometimes overcome by force. Even under the best form of government, and the wisest and purest administration, there is an incalculable amount of vice and crime.

If this life is all the existence which men are to have, or if beyond this world men who have known each other here are to be strangers instead of acquaintances and friends, there is no theory which commends itself at once to reason, and to conscience, by which the facts just enumerated can be explained. Theosophists and the adherents to various other forms of Oriental philosophy assert that the evils from which men suffer here have their sources farther back than the present existence. The good man is afflicted for sins which he committed long ago, and the wicked man who prospers now is receiving the due reward for his good deeds in the perhaps distant past. In this manner all that now appears to be unjust in the inequality of conditions is explained. Such a theory of the universe, and of the way in which it is governed, we cannot accept. We believe that all things are directed, or permitted, by an all-wise Creator, and that He will, in due time, make plain all the mysteries with which His children are now perplexed and dismayed. And we have no doubt that the recognition after death of those who have known and influenced each other here will be one of the means by which this end will be effected.

In this world God has not only given us the capacity to love, but He has taught us that we must exercise this love toward all the children of men. Not only this, but He has taught us to sanctify all love by consecrating it to Himself. The Bible abounds with descriptions of the ardent love of kindred and friends, and in various places in the New Testament the love of others is made the test of love to God. The Apostle John declares that "if we love one another, God abideth in us." And he further assures us that "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." One of the very foundations of the religion of Christ is the exercise of kindly feelings and the performance, when necessary, of not only kindly, but helpful, deeds.

Throughout the world, and among all classes of people, love is the great passion of life. It sustains men and women under the most terrible trials, it leads them to put forth the most heroic efforts, and enables them to make the purest and noblest sacrifices of which human nature is capable. It is the most inspiring force in all the universe. It draws souls together as no other influence can. More than this, it survives all changes of fortune and all the mutations of time. God Himself is love, and in so far as their love is pure and consecrated, mankind follow Him when they are guided by this sacred and mysterious emotion.

Now it would not be at all in accordance with the nature of God, as it is revealed to us in His Word, that He should give us a wonderful capacity for love, and allow this absorbing passion to have such a moulding and controlling effect upon everything which pertains to our being during the brief moment of our existence in this world, and then deprive us of all its joys and all its possibilities for usefulness and development in the untold ages upon ages which lie beyond the earthly life. It seems utterly impossible that He should allow "two souls to grow together here, so that the separation of a day is pain, and then wrench them apart for all eternity."¹ Such separations would leave only mutilated lives. It is not to be imagined, much less believed, that the noblest part of our nature will perish when the soul passes away from earth. No life can be complete apart from God, and there can be no true union with God unless there is also an affectionate union with His children. If recognition

¹ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *Gates Ajar*.

of those whom we love here can perish after death, it is only natural to suppose that even the knowledge of the love of God may also cease.

In this world friends are often widely separated by circumstances which they cannot control. How many friends we have whom we seldom see and from whom we hear only at intervals of many years. The playmates of childhood, the companions of youth, the classmates at institutions of learning, — how widely those who survive are scattered over the face of the earth! How often, in youth, or middle life, the paths of the best of friends diverge never again to meet on earth! Then, too, there are the far more pathetic separations of friends and relatives which are caused by misunderstandings, by petty jealousies, or, perhaps, by actual wrongs. How often such separations continue for many years and no remedy for them is found on this side the grave! Yet through all the period of estrangement some measure of affection survives, and after one of the parties has been removed by death the survivor, whether he believes that he suffered or committed the wrong, longs for an opportunity for reconciliation. Reason teaches that such separations, whether the result of changes of abode or caused by real or fancied wrongs, will not be final. It indicates that after the unseen world is entered there will be a complete recognition of those who knew each other here, and that an abundant opportunity will be given all who desire to do so to make amends for their shortcomings during the earthly life.

It is a doctrine of Scripture that the angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." Popular legends have taught that each child has its guardian angel, and some who have accepted this theory have held that the heavenly messenger continued its ministrations as long as the person lived. Various heathen peoples are said to have had a more or less clearly defined idea of this sort. Among the Jews the theory appears to have been quite generally held, and in the early Christian church it found many adherents.

Among Christians the doctrine of a guardian angel was principally founded upon two passages of Scripture. Of these, one appears in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, and

The partings and misunderstandings of friends.

Recognition of angels.

is a part of a discourse of Christ to his disciples. Here He says unto them, partly at least in warning against an offense which He saw that they were liable to commit: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The other statement is found in the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and forms part of the narrative of the deliverance of the Apostle Peter from prison. When the maid who had been called to the gate by his knocking informed the company in the house, who were then engaged in prayer for him, that the Apostle himself had come, they called her mad, and insisted that she had heard, not Peter, but "his angel."

While the idea that a good angel attended the child, and perhaps was near him during all his earthly life, was held by many Christians, and was upheld by some of the Fathers, it did not become an established doctrine of the church. In course of time, however, the reverence for angels increased to such an extent that they were invoked and even worshiped by some of the more zealous believers in the influence of these heavenly ministers in the affairs of men. This was considered by others as verging closely upon, if not actually amounting to, idolatry. At one of the great councils of the church this matter was considered, and it was decided that angels should not be worshiped, but that "a reverential obeisance" — to their images, we suppose — would not be wrong.

Some of the Fathers believed in evil angels as fully as they did in those who were good. They taught that while the one class constantly prompted men to good thoughts and deeds, the other class were equally active and efficient in leading to evil thoughts and inciting to wicked deeds. The belief spread to a considerable extent and has never become extinct, but it is probably not nearly as common or as influential now as it was a few centuries ago.

To reflective men who have believed either in the theory of a special guardian angel for each person, or have thought that as men had need of their aid these messengers of God were sent to their relief, the question of recognition of these heavenly beings in the world beyond has been of great interest. It is not at all improbable that these angels will join the souls of the departed very soon after they enter the spiritual world, if, indeed,

they do not hover around the beds of the dying ones, and guide the souls from earth to their new abode. Just how recognition of these hitherto unseen friends will be effected we cannot tell; but the problem is no more difficult than are many others which we cannot solve here, but which we have no doubt will be quickly made clear when the need for explanation appears.

Then, too, there is the question of the recognition of men whom we have not seen on earth, but of whom we have read or
Recognition of persons known here only by reputation. heard, and who have not only awakened our interest, but have greatly influenced our lives. It is not to be imagined that any Christian is to be long in the presence of such men as Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Isaiah, or of the Apostle Paul, or Peter, or John, and not know that he has been permitted to meet some distinguished personage. Whether a formal introduction will be required, or there will be an intuitive recognition of these illustrious characters, cannot be asserted; but that there will be, on the part of all who see them, a knowledge of the identity of such leaders in the cause of God, we have not the slightest doubt. We believe, too, that in some way John Bunyan and a host of others whose writings have been the means of guiding souls to heaven will be quickly recognized by those whom they have thus led in the way of life.

Great thinkers, too, who by their studies and investigations have helped and encouraged each other, and who have inspired and guided many of their humbler readers, will also be naturally attracted to each other. It is said that in talking with Emerson some one made a disparaging remark concerning Renan, the French scholar, whose views, though brilliant, no one who holds anything approaching the Christian faith can accept. The American philosopher replied: "I do not know the man. I do not think as he does. We have never met, but — I think we shall." He recognized in Renan an earnest student, whom he believed to be mistaken as to his conclusions, but of whose sincerity he had not the slightest doubt. We can readily suppose that men of such natures and capacities will be friends hereafter. This, too, will doubtless be the case with great poets, and scientists, and patriots, and men who have become distinguished, or who have faithfully tried to win distinction in any honest line of human endeavor. Such souls will either be drawn together

by a law of mutual attraction, or will soon seek and find, and if strangers here, become acquainted with each other in the home which they enter at death.

The reasons which have been stated in support of the doctrine of the recognition of friends in the world to come are of a good deal of weight. They go very far toward proving the case. But in matters of this kind the Scriptures are the chief and the final authority. *Testimony from the Scriptures.* Whatever we may learn from other sources, the knowledge thus obtained must be supplemented by revelation. We reason from the finite up to the infinite. We can understand much of the former, but for the latter we need a teacher whose knowledge has no bounds. And so we look to the Bible for information regarding all doctrines which have to do with life beyond the grave.

In our reference to the very early history of mankind we stated that, in recording the death of various patriarchs, the sacred historian used the term "gathered to his people," or one of a similar import. The use of such a phrase seems equivalent to a statement that these men had not passed out of existence, but had gone to be with relatives whom they would see and know in the spiritual world.

Farther along in the Scriptures, and considerably later in the point of time, we have narratives which plainly teach the doctrine of the recognition of friends in the future life. *The prophet and the king.* In the description of the appeal of King Saul to the spirit of the Prophet Samuel there is evidence that the inhabitants of the world beyond the one in which we are living now remember the past and recognize those with whom they had to do on earth. At this interview it was revealed to Saul that he and his sons would be with Samuel on the following day. The natural inference is that the parties were to know each other as readily and as fully in the new realm as they had been acquainted in this world.

Then there is another narrative in which the doctrine of recognition after death appears to be very clearly set forth. This relates to the sickness and death of one of the children of David. *King David and his child.* We read that during the progress of the illness, the king "besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and stood beside him, to raise

him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died." When this event occurred the servants of the king were reluctant to tell him, for fear that he would be so overcome as to do himself harm. But when he learned the truth there was an instant change in his demeanor. He arose from the earth, washed and anointed himself, changed his apparel, and went to the house of the Lord to worship. Thence he returned home and partook of food. His servants were greatly perplexed by this peculiar conduct, and inquired as to its cause. The king explained it by saying that while the child lived he fasted and wept in hope that the Lord would be gracious to him and restore the sick one to health. But now that he had found that his desire was not in accordance with the will of God, and the child had passed away from earth, there was no reason to continue the fasting and lamentation. In the midst of his affliction he was comforted by the thought that the parting was only for a brief period. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," are the words in which this illustrious king expressed his belief in the idea that there would be a meeting and a recognition of friends in another world.

In the fourteenth chapter of the book of Isaiah we find a prophecy concerning the king of Babylon in which occurs a description of the excitement which would be caused by the entrance of his soul into the invisible world. The inhabitants of this realm are represented as taunting him with his weakness and humiliation as compared with his former strength and glory. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst lay low the nations," are among the numerous greetings which he receives as he enters the home of the dead. This account is given with the vivid coloring of Oriental figures, but, after making all possible deductions for the play of the imagination, it certainly teaches that the spirits of the departed recognize each other in the world to which they go at death.

There are other passages in the Old Testament which strongly intimate that the inhabitants of the unseen world are aware of the coming of other spirits and are able to recognize all with whom they have had acquaintance here. But it is to the New Testament, with its later

*A prophetic
picture.*

*Still clearer light
from the New
Testament.*



CHRIST INSTRUCTING AN INQUIRER.

and its far more complete revelation, that we turn for the clearest light upon this great subject. Here we do not find the doctrine explicitly stated, but there are many passages which imply that those who on earth are friends lose none of their knowledge of, or affection for, each other by passing through the experience of death. In fact, the idea of recognition beyond the grave seems to have been so generally understood and accepted that no one thought that an elaborate statement or defense of it was required.

In one of His discourses Christ urges His hearers to "strive to enter in by the narrow door," and declares that, on account of their sins, many who seek to enter will not obtain admission. Of those who are excluded He says: *A warning to the unrepentant.*

"There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without." Here we are plainly taught that people of the class to whom Christ referred as unfit to enter the abode of the righteous would see and know the patriarchs and the prophets who had, long before His coming to earth, entered their home in the realm which lies beyond the range of mortal vision. It is incredible that they should have this power of recognition as it concerned notable characters of earlier times, and have not been able to know their own relatives and friends.

The narrative of the rich man and Lazarus is a still more emphatic utterance of Christ as respects the doctrine of recognition after death. It does not make the slightest difference, so far as this point is concerned, whether this *The rich man and Lazarus.* narrative is, as we believe, historical, or is merely a parable. It is certainly a statement of what Christ believed, and what He designed to teach, upon this subject. The rich man both saw and knew Abraham and Lazarus. He knew, too, that Lazarus was the identical man who had, in former times, lain at his gate and desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table. The recognition was complete. And there was nothing about the circumstances of the case to make it an exception to the general rule. The narrative taught, as plainly and as emphatically as a direct statement could have done, the fact that men who know each other before death will know each other after they die. If there were no evidences or intimations from other

sources, and there were not another line of Scripture in its favor, this narrative should remove all doubt as to the truth of the doctrine that after the scene of life and activity has been transferred to another world there will be a full recognition of each other by those who were acquainted on earth.

The words of Christ at the tomb of Lazarus also support the doctrine of recognition in the future. The sorrowing Martha was confident that her brother would "rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She believed that when this great event came to pass she should meet him again and know him as intimately as she had known him before he died. If her confidence as to their power of recognition had failed, and she had thought it possible that they would be strangers to each other in the world to come, she would have found comparatively little comfort in the idea of the resurrection. Though unknown to her, Christ was about to restore her brother to the earthly life, and the old love and companionship would go on as they had done before the dark shadow of death had fallen over the peaceful home in Bethany. As a matter of course, the relatives knew each other while they continued to live in this world. But they also knew that there would come a time which would mark their final separation here. If, after that moment had passed, they were to meet again it must be in the realm which is beyond the earth. And the Master did not intimate that Martha was to be disappointed in the expectation that she would meet and know her brother in that unseen land.

Then, too, in an argument with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection of the dead, Christ allowed the doctrine of recognition in the future life to stand unchallenged. His opponents cited the case of a woman who, in accordance with the law of Moses regarding instances of this kind, had been successively the wife of seven brothers, and asked: "Whose wife shall she be of the seven?" Such a question implied that if life continued after death, which the Sadducees denied, there would, in such cases, be a perfect recognition of and by all the parties concerned. Christ replied that life would persist, but that its conditions would be very different from those of this world. The institution of marriage would cease. Its purpose had been accomplished on earth. It would neither be necessary nor desirable in the new home of the soul. But He did not give

*Christ at the tomb
of a friend.*

*Reply of Christ to
the Sadducees.*

the slightest hint that the doctrine of recognition after death was incorrect. He left His hearers free to suppose that, though the special tie which had united these parties on earth would not bind them beyond this world, they would continue to know each other as fully as they had been acquainted here. From this we must infer that Christ, who was the very embodiment of truth, designed to sanction the doctrine of recognition after death.

Various other sayings of Christ indicate, even more forcibly than some which we have noted, that He fully indorsed the doctrine of recognition hereafter. As we read the history of His life we find that He desires that His followers shall be with Him in His future abode.

Other indorsements of the doctrine by Christ.

He knows His sheep by name. For those who have followed Him, and for all who in the future shall believe on His name, He offers a prayer that they may so love each other as to become practically one. He speaks of the men of Nineveh who "shall stand up in the judgment" with those of His own generation and condemn them, because the former repented of their sins, although they had but little light as compared with the people to whom His message of salvation was delivered. These things point to a recognition of people by each other after they leave this world. And the doctrine is still further emphasized by the Master's representation of the future abode of the righteous as a home which would be prepared for them by Himself. All of this, and much more that Christ said and did while He was on earth, would lose all meaning if the idea of recognition in the new life were eliminated.

In various portions of the New Testament which do not deal directly with the life of Christ, and which do not to any extent record His words, there are the strongest of intimations that acquaintanceship will continue beyond the grave. Much is said of the household of the faith, of Christian fellowship, and of the family of God. Such terms could have but little meaning if they were restricted to the present life. Paul speaks of those who have faith in Christ as "members one of another," and he urges his converts to lead blameless lives, not only that they may work out their own salvation and by their examples do good in the world, but also that because of their fidelity he "may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ," and have ample proof that he "did not run in

Later portions of the New Testament.

vain neither labor in vain." Such statements and appeals show that he expected to know these people in the future life as the identical ones for whom and with whom he labored in this world.

In the first Epistle to the Thessalonians the same Apostle writes as follows: "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope." Some have interpreted this passage to mean that those who have buried believing friends should not be unduly sorrowful. They should be comforted because the departed are still conscious and at the last day will rise in bodily form. Other students of the Bible have thought that these words must have a deeper meaning than appears on the surface. For, they believe, the people to whom this epistle was sent had, without doubt, been fully instructed as to the facts of conscious existence after death and the happiness of those who died with a vital faith in Christ. Therefore it has seemed to some, at least, of these students, that the object of the Apostle in writing these words was not to strengthen the faith of his readers in doctrines which they already clearly understood and fully believed, but was to assure them that there should be not only a continuance of life but also a recognition and reunion of Christian friends beyond the grave. Whether this was, or was not, the principal idea which he designed to express, it was doubtless in his mind and formed a part of the truth which he wished to set forth. It is certain that his words justify this opinion and that they may be legitimately used to sustain the doctrine that we shall know each other after we pass beyond the bounds of the present world.

Numerous other passages in the New Testament which sustain the doctrine of recognition in the future life might be quoted, but those to which reference has been made *The continuance of family ties.* seem more than sufficient for its establishment in the minds and hearts of those who believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures. To those who do not accept the Bible as the Word of God other references would be useless. So we need not further pursue this line of inquiry. But closely connected with, and to some extent growing out of, this doctrine, are certain matters which are of great interest and which both deserve and demand consideration. Among these is the question

whether the special ties, such as those of the family, of friendship, and of nationality, which bind people together here will be continued beyond this world.

Upon this point a great deal has been written and widely divergent ideas have been expressed. It is true that the doctrine of recognition does not depend upon a con- Not necessary to recognition. tinuance of these ties. Continued existence and perfect recognition are possible without the persistence of any of these earthly bonds. And yet as men think of the great future, and look forward to the time when they will be subject to its conditions, they naturally wonder how far the life beyond corresponds to the existence here. As their loved ones are called away they can hardly help inquiring whether the tender ties which have united them in this world will pass away with the departure of the soul. They almost involuntarily ask if such relationships as those of husband and wife, of parent and child, of brother and sister, can or will be destroyed.

Upon this point we quote as follows from an able writer: "The family itself, with all its inclusions, is an earthly institution. It typifies nothing that is permanent except May complete their service here. the one great family of which God is the Father, and we children. Reason alone would infer the abrogation of all such relations, inasmuch as that for which they were instituted terminates with the present earthly state."¹ All this may be true. Whatever relationships have been arranged especially for this world will, as a matter of course, cease when we depart this life. They would, apparently, be useless in the place and state which we enter at death. The only point at issue is whether these ties which are formed on earth may not have some purpose to serve beyond the bounds of time.

The view just presented is far from being universally accepted. Charles Kingsley, in writing of his wife, said: "I know that if immortality is to include, in my case, identity of per- Possibility of continuance. son, I shall feel to her forever what I feel now. That feeling may be developed in ways which I do not expect; it may have provided for it forms of expression very different from any which are among the holiest sacraments of life; of that I take no care. The union I believe to be as eternal as my own soul."

¹ Bishop Randolph S. Foster, *Beyond the Grave*.

A later writer, who has carefully considered the life of the righteous after they pass from this world, has stated his view of the case in a manner that is interesting and instructive. After asking the question, "When our spirits meet again, is there no hope that the relationships of earth will be taken up and renewed?" he remarks that some religious leaders have taught that such ties were sinful in this life and would perish at death. Thus Buddha deserted his wife and child in hope that by this means he could the more readily find the path that leads to absolute perfection. Some, too, in Christian lands, have held that all the relationships of earth would pass away when the earth ceased to be the abode of those who had been thus united. Such views are summarily rejected, and our author continues as follows: "But to us who know that Christ consecrated marriage by His presence, and sanctified childhood by His embrace, and restored to widowhood her only son and to parentage its little daughter, and to sisterhood their only brother, there can be no possible doubt of the sacredness of all human affections and relationships. . . . Lifted up to its highest spiritual type, there will still be the mutual feeling of mother towards her child, and of child towards its mother, of husband towards his wife, and of wife towards her husband."¹ The writer just quoted admits that there are difficult problems connected with this subject which "sometimes bewilder the hopes of renewed relationships in another world," but he thinks that the difficulty which they involve comes "from thinking of eternity under the limitations of time." He also explains the incident of the argument of the Sadducees with Christ in regard to the woman who had seven husbands, by saying that the kind of marriage which prevailed at that time was vastly different from that which represents the union of two true and loving hearts. In the case referred to by the Sadducees in their effort to prove that life would not continue beyond the grave the woman was not a wife in the true sense of the word, but was a kind of property which, like land and other things of value, was subject to the laws of inheritance. It is neither natural nor reasonable that a tie of this kind should survive death.

There is also an instinctive feeling and desire that the ties of this world will be carried to the world beyond. The widow

¹ Rev. Charles H. Strong, *In Paradise*.

looks forward to meeting her husband, not merely as a man with whom she was acquainted on earth but as one who *An instinctive desire.* sustained a closer relationship to her than any other person. The father thinks of the child who has passed into the unseen realm as still his child; and the mother never ceases to feel the same motherly interest in the children who have been taken from her by death that she felt while they were with her here. Some one has expressed a belief that as long as the family circle is unbroken the members live only "a half life." Before the family life can have its highest development it must send some of its members as "forerunners into the heavenly world." Doubtless this is true, though it does not depend for its truth upon the continuance of the earthly ties after death. Its truth involves the hope of recognition, of course, but does not make necessary the restoration of the old relationships. The effect of the separation is upon the survivors of the family, not upon the departed.

Whether the relationships of earth are known or unknown in the new life, the remembrance of them will doubtless continue unimpaired. The particular duties which in this *Will at least be remembered.* world parents owe their children and children owe their parents we may be sure will not be required in the new life. To this extent at least the ties which bound them together here will perish. This will be true even where the family life was of the highest and noblest type and was sanctified and consecrated by the love of God. But we believe that as regards such families there will be on the part of their members much more than a mere recollection of the relationship which formerly existed. The old duties are no longer required, but the old affection abides. And because they were united here their souls will be drawn closer to each other in the world beyond than they would have been if they had been strangers or merely acquaintances on earth.

Where, as is often the case, the members of the family have no common bond of union, but are separated, in thought and feeling at least, by widely differing interests, there is no reason to suppose that after death there will be any stronger attraction than there was on earth. If for want of common interests here the members of a family drift away from each other until, in the course of time and by the operation of a law of our human

nature they become practically strangers, the natural inference must be that they will remain as indifferent to each other in their new home as they have been in this world. In the still more deplorable instances in which the family life is a constant discord, and home, which should be the happiest place on earth, is regarded with the greatest disfavor, we cannot imagine that the ties of this world will be known beyond the grave. But in all of these cases, with their many gradations, there will surely be a remembrance of the relationships which were sustained on earth.

It often occurs in this world that the ties of friendship are stronger and more enduring than are those of blood. While, *The ties of friend-* for reasons which have already been stated, we are *ship.* not to expect the reorganization of families in the unseen world, we think there is abundant reason to suppose that the pure and holy friendships of earth will continue forever. The special duties of the family cease at death, but we do not see why the mutual claims of a true friendship may not be eternal.

Some have feared that relatives and friends who have long preceded them into the spiritual world will make such advances in knowledge and goodness, and will find so many souls with which, because of a similarity of tastes, they will have become intimate since they passed away from earth, as to make them forgetful or indifferent regarding the ones who are left behind to continue the conflict with the forces which tend to dwarf their higher natures. But this is a groundless fear. We may be sure that "all love is of God and will endure. We need not fear that our friend whom we have loved so much here will leave us there for some higher society with which he has more affinity. . . . It is the nature of Christian love to be able to come down in deeper sympathy with all below, as it ascends in fullness of life to loftier attainment above."¹

It is certain that the affections form a large part of the higher nature of humanity. They are interwoven with everything which pertains to the present state of those who live in accordance with the law of righteousness. The tie of a true friendship remains strong and unyielding through all the changes of time and the vicissitudes of fortune, and never fails until those whom

¹ James Freeman Clarke, D. D., *Common Sense in Religion*.

it had united as with bands of steel are separated by death. Even then, the survivor has a right to feel that the parting will be for only a little while. Communication has been interrupted, it is true, but there is every reason to believe that the friend who is on the other side of the line by which they are separated is waiting and watching for a reunion as eagerly as is the one who remains upon earth. Those who have gone from us remember us even as we remember them, and they doubtless look forward to a joyful meeting with us when we shall have followed them into the spiritual realm. We cannot doubt that where the parties were here united in Christian love the one who remains is fully justified in accepting as his own the sentiment of Charles Wesley, as expressed in the following verse from one of his hymns: —

“ I feel a strong, immortal hope,
Which bears my mournful spirit up
Beneath its mountain load ;
Redeemed from death, and grief and pain,
I soon shall find my friend again,
Within the arms of God.”

In connection with the doctrine of recognition beyond this world there has been a great deal of speculation as to what would occur in cases in which some members of a family died in infancy, or early childhood, while others lived to an advanced age; or in those in which the parents died while their children were quite young, and the latter lived to the period of middle life, or beyond that stage. For instance, a mother dies, leaving several small children. She passes at once into the spiritual world and, we believe, makes constant progress in the new life. Her children grow up, go through the ordinary experiences of humanity, and, after spending their allotted time here, are called away. When they die they are not only much older than they were when their mother was taken from them, but they also have greatly changed in form and character. The question at once comes to mind, How is she to recognize them as her children? How, too, are they to know that she is their mother?

*Recognition by
those long
separated.*

To these queries, and others of a similar nature, no certain answer can be given. It is possible that those who enter the world of spirits are permitted to know the condition of the ones whom they left behind at death. They may be watching over

us with a deep and unceasing interest. This, however, is principally conjecture. We have no doubt that the departed remember us, and that they care for us as truly and as earnestly as they did before they died, but we do not feel as sure that they are able to keep us under their constant observation. And, even if it is true that those in the spiritual world are fully informed as to what occurs to their friends upon the earth, this fact only helps them to solve the problem. It does not assist us at all. It shows how they may at once know us when we enter the realm in which they abide, but it throws no light upon the question how we are to recognize them. We have no means of knowing what changes they may pass through during the interval of separation.

Perhaps the true solution of the problem will be found in an immensely increased power of the mental and spiritual faculties and perceptions after death. In this world relatives or friends may be separated for many years, each of the parties may greatly change in appearance, and yet if they accidentally meet, the old acquaintanceship will soon be brought to mind. If this power is sufficiently increased it will enable all who knew each other here promptly to recognize one another in the world which is entered at death. A writer who, in common with others, has noted this explanation, has also suggested that possibly the soul may be able to change its form, as after His resurrection Christ changed the appearance of His body, "so that neither Thomas nor any of His other disciples might ever doubt, even in their darkest hours, that they had seen the risen Lord."¹ To us the theory of quickened perceptions appears the more probable.

We may also expect that the differences of age with which we are familiar here will be continued in the future world. One of the great charms of earthly life and earthly society is found in their wonderful diversity. Doubtless the same principle will hold true in the new abode of the human race. The different ages which are needed to make up the ideal community here will be found in the life beyond. This is a dictate of reason and common sense, and there are biblical intimations that it represents the actual condition of society in the spiritual world.

When the Prophet Zechariah foretold the restoration of the

*All periods of
human life
represented.*

¹ William W. Kinsley, *Old Faiths and New Facts*.

Holy City, he assured the scattered captives that "there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age." But to fully complete the picture of the peace and happiness which should then prevail, he added: "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." This, he made known to his people, was no mere fancy of his own, but was the veritable word of God. His commission to present this inspiring description was stated in the solemn words: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts."

The Jerusalem of which the prophet wrote and spoke was a type and a symbol of the city of God, in which His loving subjects shall find a home when the duties and the trials of life in this world have become things of the past. This prophecy, as well as various other references, gives us scriptural ground for believing that in the realm which the righteous enter at death they will find all the diversities of age. There will be infants, and children, and youth, and middle-aged, and aged ones there. All will be happy and all will be led along "the sublime and eternal path of progress." Yet the differences of age, as well as those of the mental and spiritual organization, will remain. But all will live on a far higher plane than that of earth. So there will be no weakness of infancy and no infirmity of age. From the youngest to the eldest, each according to the measure of its individual capacity, the soul will be filled with the power and rejoice in the glory of an immortal life.

The thought that in another world we shall recognize those with whom we have been acquainted here should induce us to earnestly strive to form noble characters while we remain upon earth. There all masks are thrown aside and all deceptions are exposed. Appearances will no longer mislead. We shall pass for just what we are. And the way in which we live here is sure to determine our place and condition elsewhere.

It is important to remember that all life in the intermediate state, or in heaven, is not on the same plane. The man who thinks that he can live a careless, worldly, and an essentially selfish life here, and yet enter the unseen world with a soul fitted for the noblest pleasures and the highest enjoyments, is making a terrible mistake. If he dwarfs his soul here he must find it a

dwarfed soul hereafter. If he desires to enter a rich and glorious life beyond this world he should fit himself for it here. And if he wishes to meet and enjoy companionship with the relatives and friends who have served God here, and are now rejoicing in His love in a higher sphere of life and activity than this world affords, he must prepare himself by consecration and effort for the conditions which prevail in the home to which they have gone.

Doubtless in the future as in the present life the soul will seek congenial society. People of similar tastes are drawn toward each other far more strongly than are those who are not specially interested in the same subjects. In the line of intelligence, too, there is a similar attraction. Educated people prefer the society of those who have had the advantages of intellectual culture, while the ignorant choose companions who have made but little progress in learning. So far as the life here is concerned this is perfectly natural. Indeed, it could not well be otherwise. To a certain extent the same principle will govern men hereafter. But it will not be as prevailing and influential as it is here and now. For in the spiritual world the souls that desire to rise to higher planes of life, and hold communion with those who are far more advanced than themselves, will undoubtedly be enabled to do so. Those whom they desire to meet will recognize their wishes and sympathize with them in their aspirations. More than this, they will most cheerfully render all the aid that may be required.

There are, it is true, many noble men who would gladly help those who are less capable, or who have been less earnest than themselves in meeting the duties and responsibilities of life, but who are so limited by circumstances which are beyond their control that only a small part of what they earnestly wish to do can be accomplished. They help some, they would help others if they could. We believe that in the new life the work thus commenced upon earth will go on in vastly increased extent and with an immeasurably greater degree of success. There will be millions of aspiring souls who will be educated and encouraged by those who were noble and consecrated here and who have made great progress since they entered upon the purer life beyond. But the desire for holiness should begin here if we would have those whom we reverence and love to be

our helpers, and to some extent our companions, when we have departed from the earth. Radical differences in character will not prevent recognition after this life, but they may, and there are the strongest of reasons to fear that they will, make communication impossible.

The doctrine of the recognition of friends beyond the grave is one which should bring great and constant comfort to all who mourn the departure of loved ones from their former homes and from the service of God on earth. If *A comfort in sorrow.* those who remain are true to Him the separation will not be long continued. The parting can then be borne with a degree of fortitude which would be impossible if there were no reasonable expectation of a reunion in the not distant future. We believe that the separation is much like that which occurs in this world when friends leave us to visit a foreign land. They pass out of our sight for a time, but they and we look forward to a reunion. So when parted by death we may expect to meet again. Unlike the earthly partings, however, our friends will not come back to us. Not they, but we, shall make the journey which will bring us together again. But we should bravely bear the trial of separation and should rejoice in the thought that each passing day brings us nearer to the time when we shall go to the country in which they have found a home, and in which we, too, shall remain.

We have already shown that in patriarchal times, among the cultured nations of antiquity, and with the uncivilized peoples of different periods of time who were widely separated as to their places of abode, there has been a *A doctrine of the Christian church.* more or less clearly defined hope or belief that in some region beyond the visible world the souls of the dead would be gathered and the acquaintanceships of earth would be renewed. With the coming of Christ a far brighter light regarding the future life was given, and what had been a desire erelong became an established doctrine. In the early church it appears to have been one of the points concerning which there was little cause for doubt. From that time to the present day it has been the very general belief of Christian people that in another world they should meet all of their loved ones who died in the faith. The Reverend Thomas Becon, one of the English Reformers, stated the doctrine as follows: "If your friends live in the fear

of God, and depart in the Christian faith," they will be sure to come "unto the glorious kingdom of God, where you shall both see them, know them, talk with them, and be much more joyful with them than ever you were in this world." Numbers of other preachers and writers of earlier as well as of later dates could be quoted as expressing similar sentiments.

In recent times this appears to have been the common belief, and of late there have been a large number of most emphatic statements of the doctrine by men of prominence in the various Christian denominations. Thus Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, has said: "That our heavenly home will satisfy our fullest social longings we cannot doubt. . . . The recognition of friends there cannot possibly be a question of doubt. No barriers of caste can separate those who are children of the one Father, and dwelling in the same household." And in treating "the question of recognition in the other world," an able theologian declared that "it ought never to have been an open question at all. It would take a direct revelation to make me believe that God would permit a state of things so pitiable and contrary to all that we know of His character as non-recognition would imply."¹

The evidences which have been presented bear witness so strongly in favor of the doctrine of the recognition of friends after death, and this view so perfectly harmonizes with the purest and the noblest sentiments of the human heart, as well as fully corresponds with what we know of the ways of God in the past and what has been revealed concerning His purposes in the future, that it seems almost impossible that any one who believes the Bible can reject the idea that friendships which are formed on earth will be continued in the future life. Yet it is a fact that a few people who hold the general tenets of the religion of Christ, and of whose sincerity there can be no question, are confident that upon this point the vast majority of their brethren are in error. According to their view we shall enter the unseen world as strangers to all whom we have ever known in this life. All earthly ties are sundered at death. With the final parting here relatives and friends are as completely and eternally lost to each other as they would be if death involved the destruction of the body and the annihilation of the soul.

Objections to the doctrine.

¹ Lewis F. Stearns, *Present Day Theology*.

Of those who reject the doctrine of recognition after death probably much the larger number do so because of the belief that if it were true the saved would be constantly sorrowing for relatives and friends who were lost. *Relatives and friends who are lost.* We are forced to believe that many, in all, pass out of this world in a spiritual condition which entirely unfits them for the society of the pure and disqualifies them for the enjoyments and the pleasures which God has provided for those who have been loyal to Him. For such there must be exclusion from the realm in which holiness is the condition and love is the law of existence. This, and what naturally and inevitably grows out of it, is a fearful punishment. And there will be many in the better world who will know that some of their nearest relatives, and their most cherished friends while on earth, are undergoing this chastisement. This knowledge, it is claimed, would make happiness impossible even in heaven. We are not disposed to depreciate this argument. It presents a real and a serious difficulty. Yet we cannot believe that it is insuperable, or that it should in the slightest degree impair our faith in the doctrine of recognition hereafter.

Various explanations have been made which are designed to reconcile the apparent contradiction involved in the perfect happiness of the good and the knowledge, on their part, that many of their loved ones are in a condition of misery. Some hold that punishment is principally, if not wholly, remedial, and believe that it will, sooner or later, bring forth fruit for good. They hope, and many of them expect, the ultimate restoration of all souls. Others believe that those who will not repent will eventually be utterly destroyed. They will look upon the punishment of the lost as a proper and necessary vindication of the justice of God, whose call to obedience was persistently refused. They will be sustained by the belief that when the end for which it is inflicted is secured the suffering will cease forever. Those who believe that the punishment of some who are dear to them will be eternal may be sustained by the thought that God is infinitely just, and consequently not one of His creatures will be wronged in the slightest degree. They will remember, too, that Christ loves these souls infinitely more than any human being can care for them, and they can also be sure that if it is possible those who have been lost will be brought back to God.

Some have thought that the saved will "have such enlarged views of God's holiness, wisdom, and justice," and will "so clearly discern the reasons of the sentence of condemnation" against the lost, that they will fully acquiesce therein. Others have thought that the saved will have the power of keeping their thoughts from anything which would cause them the slightest degree of unhappiness. Another theory is that in some way God will, if necessary, "providentially interpose" and by some merciful provision will keep the saved in perfect peace even though they know of the sufferings of those who are dear to them. Various other methods of solving the problem have been suggested. Which, if any of them, is correct, cannot be affirmed. But we know that God has infinite resources and that He will surely give the happiness which He has promised to all who trust in Him.

Another objection to the doctrine of recognition which has been made by a few writers upon this subject is based on the idea that in the future world all human love will be centred in Christ. The joy of the Christian will not be caused by seeing parents, or children, or brothers, or sisters, or friends, safe from the assaults of sin, and free from sorrow and pain forever, but in beholding Christ who is "the centre and the sun of all that life and joy." One writer, in a religious paper, has gone so far as to say that "all other relationships will be swallowed up in this greater relationship which we will all have, in Jesus Christ our Lord."

This theory appears to be directly opposed to the spirit which marked the work of Christ in this world, and to the representations which the Scriptures give of the conditions which will prevail when His kingdom is fully and forever established. Christ came into the world not only to save men, and draw them unto Himself, but also to attach them to each other by the cords of a pure and self-sacrificing love. He taught that God was the common Father and that all men were brothers. He required devotion to Himself, it is true, but the evidence of that devotion was, in a great measure, to appear in kindly thoughts and helpful deeds to men. And time and experience have shown that wherever the love of Christ has been the strongest there the love of man has been the purest and the most enduring. Thousands of men and women whose souls were filled with love to Christ have



CHRIST AT THE TOMB.

left the comforts and pleasures of home and in distant fields have spent their lives in arduous toil for people whom they would never have seen, and in whom they would have had no interest if they had not been inspired with this sacred emotion. In all the ages of the Christian church the men who have been the most devoted to the Master have been the most zealous and self-sacrificing workers for the uplifting of men and women as individuals, and for the promotion of the best interests of society at large. It is true that some who have not connected themselves with any branch of the church have rendered splendid service to their fellows and are justly ranked with the benefactors of the race. But this was not because they declined to be classed as Christians. They had inherited, or had caught from their surroundings, something of the spirit of Christ. They builded better than they knew.

Now as one of the great principles of the religion of Christ, as taught by Himself and as expounded by the Apostles, is the love of man growing out of love to God, it is difficult to see how this affection for men can be regarded as detracting from what is due to Christ. So far as this world is concerned, Christ certainly did not want all love centred in Himself. He desired that His followers should so love each other as to make them one, and that they should so love all who were outside of His fold as to impel them to put forth the most earnest efforts for their salvation. And those to whom Christ left the interests of His kingdom on earth taught the same doctrine and labored in the same spirit. All men were brothers, though some were astray. All possible effort for the salvation of mankind was to be put forth, and all who accepted Christ were thereby to become members "of the household of the faith." Henceforth all believers were to be "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." It seems incredible that all this love to man should be required, that such constant and earnest efforts for the welfare of our common humanity here and hereafter should be demanded, that those who followed Christ should be so closely united for the brief period to which this earthly life is limited, and that after all of this toil and devotion these men who have loved, and labored, and sacrificed for others, should lose all interest in one another at death. We cannot believe that such a loss of affection and interest occurs. Reason and Scripture unite in

their indications that the members of the family of Christ and the household of faith will be acquainted with each other, and will be united by the same loving ties which bound them upon earth.

We hardly need to dwell further upon the evidence which the Bible supplies in regard to this special feature of the future life, except to glance at the condition of the blessed after the work of redemption is completed. When Christ directed the attention of His disciples to the unseen world, and the establishment of His kingdom therein, He told them of mansions which he would prepare for them. He pictured a home in which they would dwell in perfect peace. There was no hint that their love was to be entirely given to Himself. They must have understood that they were to know and love each other there even more truly and more completely than they had known and loved each other here. And the Apostle John, in his description of the abode of the saved, tells of "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues," who are gathered before the throne of God. He describes in splendid imagery the great city in which they are to dwell, and asserts that into it are to be brought "the glory and the honor of the nations." He pictures a life of joyful activity. There is no intimation that men live apart from each other, or that each individual is so absorbed in the worship and contemplation of Christ as to be unconscious of the presence of others, or indifferent to their happiness. The representation is directly contrary to this. There is united worship, and united service. There is a clear recognition of the friends of the earthly life and of those with whom acquaintance has been formed in the spiritual world.

It is an appalling idea, and yet it is one which much that we see in this world, and that the Scriptures declare, compel us to entertain, that some members of the human family will fail to enter heaven. Their abode will be vastly different, both as to place and character, from that of the saved. Will they, like those who have made a better use of their opportunities here, be able to recognize in their final home those in the same realm whom they knew and loved on earth? We believe that this question must be answered in the affirmative.

The argument of personal identity applies just as forcibly in

*Recognition among
the lost.*

the case of a lost soul as it does in that of one that is saved. The man remains himself. He is not and cannot be changed into some one else when he dies, or at any period after death. Consequently, he must have in the other world the same mental and spiritual qualities which made him what he was here. He must know himself, and know every one of his former acquaintances whom he meets.

It is probable, we may almost say certain, that in some way the souls of those who have been led into evil by others will recognize the ones who helped them in the downward way even though they may never have met in this world. The author of a book, or of any other publication, which leads men away from God and causes them to leave the path of honor or virtue is, to a certain extent, responsible for the ruin that results therefrom. In common with the acquaintances of earth who led others astray, such souls will be hated, and doubtless reviled, by those whom they ruined here.

Much more might be said regarding the recognition of each other by lost souls, but it does not seem necessary to pursue the subject further. If the saved know each other beyond this life, as we are sure they do, the lost must have the same power of recognition. Wherever it is, and whatever the conditions under which it is placed, as long as the soul exists as a personal being it must be conscious of its own identity and retain the power of recognizing all other souls with which it has had acquaintance in the past.

The doctrine of the recognition of friends after death presents some difficulties, but the arguments in its favor are unanswerable. The perplexities which it involves are as nothing when compared with those which we should be obliged to face if the opposite view were accepted. By reason and by revelation the doctrine is fully sustained.

*The doctrine of
recognition sus-
tained.*

We are certainly justified in claiming that whenever and wherever they meet after death there will be recognition of those who knew each other on earth. The ties of relationship, having served their purpose here, will not be fully restored, but they will never be forgotten. The true and helpful friendships of this world will remain unbroken. And the law of attraction which causes the formation of intimate companionships here will operate hereafter. Thus the circle of friendship, and that of

kindly though perhaps not intimate acquaintanceship, will be immeasurably enlarged. Those who are saved will see and know the patriarchs and prophets and apostles, the saints and the martyrs, and a great multitude of others who in their day and generation were valiant in the cause of truth. And the lowly ones of earth, who were faithful according to their capacities and opportunities, will not be neglected. Their company will be sought and their love will be desired. No one will be friendless there. But it is reasonable to expect that, next to the Master Himself, those who will be dearest to the soul in the new home will be the ones who were loved on earth and with whom the hopes and the fears, the joys and the sorrows, and the trials and the conflicts of life in this present world were shared.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE NEW CONDITIONS

REGARDING the conditions of the life of the soul after its separation from the body but little information can be obtained from the Scriptures, and reason alone is not able to penetrate the veil which separates those who are living upon the earth from those whom we call dead, though we are confident that they are as truly alive as ourselves. But there are some things which the Scriptures teach, others which they intimate, and reason gives us various hints which will aid us in an attempt to gain light upon this subject. Therefore, while there are many points of interest upon which no information is to be secured, there are others about which we may be able to obtain some degree of knowledge.

Meagre information.

We have previously shown that the life of the soul is not interrupted by the event of death. We feel fully warranted in the assertion that there is no continued loss of consciousness and no state of inactivity. The Scriptures teach that the soul maintains a full, free, vigorous, and progressive life. The new conditions fully provide for the constant development of the spiritual being.

Continued life of the soul.

In the next world the soul will bear the stamp of humanity which God has impressed upon it here. We have every reason to suppose that unless it is destroyed by the virus of sin, or perishes on account of its separation from God, it will remain a human soul. As long as it retains its personality it must carry the sign and seal of its earthly existence.

Remains human.

A Sunday-school hymn for children, which was very popular a generation ago and which is probably still used in many places, commences as follows:—

“ I want to be an angel,
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand.”

The direct teaching of the hymn is that when children who believe in Jesus depart this life they are at once borne by shining angels to the sky, and immediately become angels themselves. The same doctrine has been incorporated into hymns designed for older people, and is not infrequently seen in prose writings and heard in religious conversation. We believe that this idea, which has been so widely diffused, is wholly erroneous. Angels are an altogether different class of beings from men. We find no warrant in Scripture, and no ground in reason, for supposing that any of the human family will ever be transformed into angels. Angelic purity is something to be desired, but no child and no adult should wish to change its humanity for the angelic form or nature. Christ took the human form and died for the human race. If there were no other reason, this fact should make us more than willing to retain the distinctive characteristics of mankind.

It has been, and is still to some extent, held that during the period between death and the resurrection the soul exists in a disembodied state. But in later times the idea has been rapidly gaining ground that during this intermediate stage of its life the soul is either clothed with a fine, ethereal substance, taken from the physical body at death, or is supplied with a body, or with materials from which it quickly forms one, as it enters the spiritual realm. It is a physiological law that wherever there is life there is organization, and it seems far more reasonable that after death a body should be provided for those who lived in a bodily form here than it does that they should remain in a disembodied state until the resurrection. It appears entirely probable that although at death we shall be "unclothed" in the sense of losing our physical bodies, we shall receive other bodies which will, until the resurrection, serve us far more efficiently than those which we now have answer the demands which we make upon them.

Although we believe that death will be a great uplift to the soul, we are sure that it does not bring all that life has in store.

Life not complete. Existence is on a higher plane than that of earth, but it is still subject to limitations. The condition of the good, though unquestionably one of peace and happiness, is not the perfect life to which they looked forward while they were fighting their spiritual enemies in this world. That, the

Scriptures assure us, will not be reached until the soul is united with its glorified body at the resurrection.

As to those who have failed to make a proper use of life on the earth, we must have the same idea of an incomplete existence. The soul is separated from the body, and, as is the case with the righteous, this condition involves certain limitations. But there is something more than this to be noted. While its removal from the body may cause the soul to think most seriously upon its needs, and thus raise life to a higher plane than it occupied on earth, it must still be a very different quality of life from that which the righteous enjoy. The event of death does not bring the bad and the good to the same level. The character that is formed here, whether it is good or bad, is carried into the world beyond.

That the good will be constantly growing in the love and knowledge of God there can be no doubt. Whether the bad will be constantly growing worse; will be under some form of restraint which will prevent progress in wickedness; or, as some have supposed, they will be placed under influences which will lead them to repent of sin, and will result in their salvation, cannot be affirmed. Each of these theories has its able advocates. We wish we could find scriptural ground for accepting the most cheerful view. But if we have read the Bible aright, the present life is the only specified time of probation for those who have a knowledge of the truth. For those who never hear of Christ in this world we believe there will be abundant means of salvation in the unseen realm, or else, like those who do not reach the age of moral accountability here, they may be saved through His merits, though they have no intelligent idea of what He has done in their behalf.

While there will certainly be a wide difference in the experiences of the righteous and the wicked, it can be affirmed that through this great intermediate period in the life of the soul there is no judicial decision regarding its character. This comes at the close of the Gospel dispensation. In some measure the good will be rewarded for their faith and fidelity, and the wicked will suffer on account of their unbelief and sin; but the happiness and the misery will not in any degree proceed from a public announcement of the character or deserts of the soul. In His recorded teaching

*Not a state of
rewards and
punishments.*

regarding the future life Christ pointed to the judgment as the time when each soul would receive its final award.

One of the effects of death and entrance upon a new life will be an unveiling of the soul. In this world there are so many duties, and cares, and distractions, that many people fail to obtain any adequate knowledge of themselves. They are so absorbed in other things that they seldom give serious thought to what should be the real purpose of their lives. They do much for their bodies, but they hardly do anything for their souls. Even those who have endeavored to live in accordance with the commands of Christ do not know themselves as minutely as they should. Thus it will come to pass that when the soul enters the spiritual world its real character and just deserts will be seen by the soul itself much more perfectly than they ever were discerned on earth. Doubtless, too, the appearance of the soul will indicate its true nature far more clearly than the personal presence ever did here. The appearance of the good and of the evil will be so widely different, and that of each will be so sharply defined, that there can be no mistake on the part of any one in the estimate of the character of any soul.

It is common to speak of the dead as having passed beyond the bounds of time and entered upon eternity. The idea thus presented is incorrect. Time is going on just as it has been passing from the moment of its beginning, and just as it will go on until the last great day. Yet, during this ceaseless march of time, countless millions of souls have been passing into the spiritual world. It was not until the closing of the era of earthly things that the Apostle John, in his prophetic vision, saw an angel which, "standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be time no longer."

We must, however, admit that time may exist during the period between death and the judgment and yet the soul may be unconscious of its passing. Indeed, we often see something akin to this in the present world. Not infrequently children at play lose all idea of time, and adults often become so deeply

interested in their work or their studies as to be oblivious of their surroundings and take no note of the fleeting hours. But this state cannot continue for a long period. The demands of the body cannot be indefinitely ignored. After a while weariness of the flesh, or of the brain, will recall the thoughts from the most absorbing theme, the highest pleasure, or the most enjoyable occupation, and concentrate them upon the needs of the physical system.

In the spiritual world the conditions of life and activity will be very different from what they are here. If we have bodies, they will be very different from those in which we now abide. If we exist as disembodied spirits, or have only shadowy forms, the difference between the new life and the old will be still more clearly defined. Some have supposed that, under these changed conditions, the passing of time would be unnoticed. They have thought that the good would be in such perfect peace and contentment that they would have no idea of its onward flow. Thus far the theory does not seem to be very unreasonable. But it does not at all fit the case of the wicked, whose mental condition must be one of regret and apprehension, if not of positive misery. Perhaps there will be no standard of measurement by which any of the departed can determine the rate of its progress, but it seems more probable that both the good and the bad will have some means of noting the flight of time.

There are some who hold that the period between death and the resurrection is one in which the soul is isolated from all other created beings. There are others who believe that the soul remains unconscious. In preceding *An active life.* pages we have stated our reasons for rejecting these theories. We believe that this great period will be one of active and efficient effort. The Apostle Paul toiled in season and out of season in this world in order to save souls. When he desired to depart and be with the Master whom he served with such fiery zeal while here we cannot think that he wished to escape from active effort in His cause. Neither can we imagine that Luther, who was so inspired with the truth and was so devoted to Christ as to become a "whirlwind of energy to work without resting in this world," ceased his labors at death. And it does not appear reasonable to suppose that any other Christian who has been earnest in the service of God while here

should at death enter upon a long period during which, so far as the progress of the Kingdom of God is concerned, he will be idle and useless.

We believe that the life of the good will be active and pleasant and that the work which is performed will be successful.

Explains providences. Such a belief throws light upon many providences which are otherwise wholly inexplicable. Instances are common in which men and women with high aims and noble purposes, who have spent years of time and made the most earnest efforts in fitting themselves for usefulness, have been called from earth at the very commencement of the work which they had become qualified to perform. We do not believe that the event of death cuts off such souls from all means and opportunities for usefulness. They are removed from the earthly field in order that they may carry on their work for God in the spiritual realm. The mother of whom a popular writer tells in one of his stories, who was willing that her son should die because she was confident that God had "some grand work" for him to do in the other world, was far wiser than those who think that the removal from this world of earnest Christian workers, who are in the prime of life and in the midst of success, is something so dark and mysterious that no reasonable explanation can be suggested.

Rest. It is true that in various places the Scriptures speak of the rest upon which the servants of God enter at death. Doubtless there will be rest, refreshing and abundant, for all the weary ones who have been faithful here. But this does not make it certain, or in the least degree probable, that life will be upon a dead level of inactivity. Here a change of employment, or of the particular line of thought, is restful to both body and mind, while long continued inaction is terribly wearing and oppressive. It is one of the laws of our being that activity is necessary to happiness, and this law will continue in force as long as the soul endures.

Forms of activity. In how many forms the activity of the departed soul will be manifested, we cannot say. We suppose that they will be far less varied than will be those of the perfected life of heaven. But that prayer and praise will be offered to God may be regarded as certain. And there will, doubtless, be many souls which need comfort, and still larger numbers who

will require instruction and guidance. Those who are far advanced will aid those who have made less progress in the Christian life, and each and all will be helpful as opportunity offers.

There is an interesting question which often comes to thoughtful minds, regarding the great multitude of undeveloped souls which enter the unseen world. Under what conditions will they be placed? Great numbers of *Undeveloped souls.* idiots, feeble-minded persons, and the insane, who have had little or no ability or opportunity for acquiring knowledge of spiritual things, are constantly passing into the unseen world. By some disease or deficiency of the body or of the brain, the proper development of such souls is prevented. The instruments with which they have been provided for the carrying on of the work of life are defective. We believe that these undeveloped souls will enter the unseen realm with all of these limitations removed. They must, of necessity, commence the new life with a very inferior equipment as compared with that of souls which were more fortunately situated here, and which have become strong and cultured by discipline and experience. But we believe that they will have loving and efficient teachers, under whom they will make rapid progress. Life will hold out to them the same opportunities for good, and bring to them the same means of happiness, that others have already received. They start a little later in the race, but from the moment of their entrance into the new life their course is as free, and their progress will be as easy and as rapid, as it is in the cases of the relatives and companions who watched over and cared for them while they were incapacitated here.

Closely allied to the subject just noted is that of the condition of those who pass away from earth in infancy, or early childhood. Countless numbers of parents have laid the forms of their little children in the grave. For these dear *The little children.* ones they mourn as long as life continues. As they look backward they remember their treasures as they were while here on earth, and they also think, oftentimes with unutterable sorrow, of what "might have been" if the lives that were so soon cut off had been prolonged. And so it will be until time shall end. In spite of all that can be done by a better understanding of the laws of health, and a closer compliance therewith, children

will die and the hearts of their parents will be left sad and desolate.

In a previous chapter we have stated our belief that the differences in age which are known in this world will be continued in the future life. As compared with their elders, children will remain children forever. But there will be a constant and rapid development of the mental powers, and a ceaseless progress in the knowledge of spiritual things. That these souls are happy is beyond a doubt. That wise and loving teachers are provided for them may also be regarded as certain. To all who have lost little ones the following comforting sentiment from the writings of Bossuet, a celebrated French preacher and author, is to be commended: "I love to think of my little children whom God has called to Himself as away at school — at the best school in the universe, under the best teachers, learning the best things, in the best possible manner." We are sure that such children are safe from evil, and that they are under the most favorable conditions for the growth and development of their spiritual natures.

Another point of great interest concerns the social relations of people to each other in the spiritual realm. We have endeavored to show that the departed soul has as definite a place as it had on earth, and that its life is vigorous and active. If these conclusions are correct we must believe that there is, in the world which we enter at death, some form of organized society. We can hardly imagine that a vast number of people could or would desire to live together, or near each other, without some definite rules and regulations as to their conduct.

If the soul is active after death it must have relations to other souls as well as to God. In order that these relations may be clearly defined, and that the duties which they involve may be faithfully and unremittingly performed, it seems necessary that there should be something equivalent at least to some of the organizations with which we are familiar here. The soul of the Christian leaves the church on earth, and it is only natural to suppose that, for its own good, for the benefit of other Christians, and for the glory of God, it should join another church when it enters the spiritual realm. Then, too, all the good who pass beyond the scenes of time will want to be useful, and it is

reasonable to suppose that in the new home, as in the one upon earth, organization will add wonderfully to the efficiency of effort.

Whether the good and the bad will mingle with each other as freely in the unseen world as they do upon earth is a question upon which there is a great difference of opinion.

There are many who hold that at death all souls, *The good and the bad.* without regard to character, pass into a single abode. Probably the majority of those who take this view also believe that the Gospel dispensation does not close until the judgment, and that the efforts that will be made after death for the salvation of souls which did not repent while upon earth will be far more effective than were those which were put forth here.

Many others believe that at death there will be an immediate separation of the bad from the good. They think that before the coming of Christ, and His preaching of the Gospel to "the spirits in prison," it is probable that all souls were gathered into a single realm. But since Christ delivered those who believed on Him there, and led them to a better world, different abodes may have been provided for souls of different characters. Still, it is not at all impossible that the parting of His friends and His enemies will not be made until, in the presence of the assembled universe, they are separated at the judgment day.

It is not to be supposed that the souls of the good, or those of the evil, provided the two classes are separated at death, will be crowded into any small area. There will be plenty of room for all. The astronomer has a slight *A vast domain.* idea of the immensity of what he knows as space, but his mind is hardly able to comprehend the extent of even this little fragment of the universe with which he has become acquainted. Yet in addition to all this there are the best of reasons for supposing that there are boundless regions which lie beyond the utmost range of his imagination.

In this world, when travelers go abroad, some land at one port and some at another, as choice or necessity may determine. It is true that the departing soul cannot choose what port of the spiritual realm it will enter, but we believe that it will be accompanied and guided by some special messengers of God — perhaps by dear ones who have preceded it to the unseen world. The haven at which it arrives will be just the one which God

desired that it should reach. And there is no doubt that from this point each soul will be conducted to some part of the great domain which will be suited to his needs.

Probably the unseen universe is as diversified as is the one that is seen and known by the bodily senses. Its inhabitants may be separated, as are those of this world, by oceans, by continents, or by almost impassable ranges of mountains. This great domain may not be material in the same sense that the earth is formed of matter, but it will doubtless be as real and as substantial as is the present world.

CHAPTER XXVII

MUTUAL REMEMBRANCE AND HELPFULNESS

No one can make an extended study of the probable conditions of life beyond the grave without becoming deeply interested in the question whether those whom we call dead retain their interest in the friends whom they have left behind, and in the affairs of the world in which they once had their home. We cannot doubt their unwavering fidelity, but we wonder whether the character of their life is such that they clearly remember us, and if their love continues unchanged. We also desire to know if they are conscious of the circumstances of our daily lives, are aware of the progress of events in the communities in which they formerly lived, and, in a more general way, if they are cognizant of what occurs throughout the world. Then, too, our love goes out to them with an even stronger current than it did while they were here, and we ask if it is possible for us to do anything that will be helpful to them.

Does interest continue?

If we were to confine our attention to what occurred when our friends were here upon earth, there would be no difficulty. We have presented ample proofs that death does not interrupt the progress of conscious life and does not make any radical change in the mental or spiritual nature of the person who dies. Consequently we feel fully justified in asserting that memory continues. Both reason and Scripture lead us to suppose that it is in active exercise. This being the case, it follows that the inhabitants of the spiritual world must, sometimes at least, think of the friends from whom they have been parted by death. They must also remember many of the things with which they had to do while they were here.

Certain as to the period spent upon earth.

Thus far we can go with full assurance. But when we project our inquiry beyond this point we find that very much depends upon the degree of knowledge which the departed possess, and we have no means of knowing just how far this

knowledge extends. We can affirm that they remember us, the relations which we sustained to them, and the experiences in which we were both interested while we were together here upon earth. And we may be sure that if they are aware of our present condition and wants they are just as fully alive to our needs and as keenly interested in all that pertains to our welfare as they ever have been. How far they are interested in our daily lives is merely a question of the extent of their knowledge regarding the affairs of the world from which their visible presence has departed.

A very large number of Christian people believe that all knowledge of what occurs on earth ceases at death. This idea is based on various grounds, such as the supposed want of a medium of communication caused by a loss of the physical senses at death; the engrossment of the soul in the new interests which centre in the world to which the departed have gone; and the fear that if they knew all that concerns their friends now upon earth those who have entered the unseen world would be in a constant state of anxiety and unhappiness, which would not only cause them pain, but would also unfit them for the duties of the state in which they are living and of the place in which they have their home.

Neither of the reasons which have been stated nor others of a somewhat similar nature, but of minor importance, appear to be conclusive. The claim that the departed have entered a realm in which they live as pure spirits is based upon a supposition on the part of those by whom it is made. It is not certainly known by any inhabitants of this world that they are disembodied spirits. In preceding pages we have endeavored to show that there is a strong probability that the departed have some form of an organization. If this view is correct, it is neither impossible nor improbable that they have not only the necessary powers, but also the means of so exercising those powers, that they can note events which take place upon the earth.

The idea that the soul is so absorbed in its new interests that it has no desire or opportunity to think of the world from which it came has no basis except that of pure imagination. We do not believe it is possible that our friends will forget us when they

*Knowledge of
earth may cease
at death.*

*Reasons for such
a belief insuf-
ficient.*



CHRIST AND TWO DISCIPLES ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS.

reach a happier place than the one in which we abide. The person who has died has carried his affections into the unseen world. They are a part of himself, and he could not, if he would, free himself from them. He does not forget, and God does not wish him to forget, a single friend. The soul that has reached a better home is not so engrossed in its own happiness, and in the beauty and glory of its surroundings, as to be indifferent to the well-being of the loved ones who were left behind when the separation by death occurred.

The claim that if our departed friends knew of our present condition, our troubles, and our sins, they would be made unhappy thereby, is not as important as it at first glance appears. Some have met this objection to their continued knowledge by the theory that in the spiritual world, which is the home of the saved, the memory is under partial control, and that by an act of the will all unpleasant thoughts can be banished from the mind. According to this theory the departed have a general knowledge of our affairs, and yet are not aware of our trials and our conflicts. We cannot accept this view. If they know of us at all, they know of us as we are. They know of the evil that so often crops out from within us, and of that which assails us from without, as well as of the good which we cherish in our hearts and which comes to us in our daily lives.

A far higher conception than that of the partial control of the memory, and one which we believe to be true, is that if our friends are aware of our sorrows and our conflicts, they are enabled by the power and the grace of God to see that the discipline through which we are passing is necessary, and is designed to work out for us the greatest possible good. They may sympathize with us, even as Christ sympathizes with those who follow Him, and yet, like Him, may be happy.

We confidently claim that in the case of the good, death raises the soul to a higher plane of existence than the one upon which it lived while it was connected with the body. And so far as purely spiritual matters are concerned, the same thing may be predicated of the wicked, for they will certainly think more of their relation to God than they did while they were in this world. The life of the former will be one of growth and improvement. This cannot be affirmed regarding the latter. But we are willing to

*Dormant powers
may be quickened,
or new ones
bestowed.*

admit the probability that both classes of persons are endowed with powers which, in the great majority of cases, remain dormant as long as their possessors are in this world, but which may be of great efficiency after death. Then, too, it may be that new powers will be given to the soul, or we may believe, as an excellent theological writer,¹ from whom we have several times quoted, has suggested, it is possible that "the dead possess some organization through which they can act upon, and be acted upon, by the material world. We know too little of the nature of the spirit to speak dogmatically upon a point so imperfectly treated in the Bible." While dogmatism is to be avoided, we think the suggestion is reasonable, and is worthy of a somewhat more pronounced statement than is made in the above extract.

Upon the other means which the departed may have of acquiring a knowledge of this world, various writers have expressed widely differing views. Some of these are so trivial as to hardly call for notice. But others are of sufficient importance to deserve serious consideration.

*Other means of
acquiring infor-
mation.*

Many people have supposed that the dead have the power of seeing us, as persons from the top of a high building can see those who are on the ground below, or as men see through open doors and windows the people who are within the houses which they pass. Others think that the righteous dead obtain information regarding their friends through direct communication with God who knows all of their circumstances and desires. Not a few who have never formulated such a belief cherish a vague hope that in hours of severe trial the dear ones who have passed on to the better world are near to sympathize with and to comfort them with their presence, which is real though unseen. Probably a still larger number hope that in the hour of death some loved one from the other world will be present to allay their fears and to lead the way to the new home of the soul. If such activities as these are permitted it is certain that the departed know something of their relatives and friends who remain upon earth. They may not have a constant knowledge, but by some divine impulse, or by the direction of some heavenly messenger, they may be sent to minister to the living or

¹ Lewis French Stearns, *Present Day Theology*.

to the dying in the time of their greatest need. There are many things, some of which have been noted in preceding pages, which strongly support this view.

If consciousness persists after death, and people who were acquainted in this world recognize each other in the unseen world, as we have endeavored to show is the case, we are fully justified in assuming that as souls pass into the unseen world they carry to those whom they meet information concerning mutual acquaintances and friends who remain behind. This is not a distinctively Christian idea, though it is held by large numbers of the believers in Christ. The Druids, and members of races or tribes of a still earlier period, as well as some of a later date, had a custom of sending by the dying messages to friends who had previously entered the unseen world. It is, however, eminently fitting that the idea of a continued interest on the part of the deceased regarding their friends who still remain upon earth should be clearly indicated in the Christian system.

Another reason for believing that interest in the affairs of this world does not cease at death, though it does not show how any new knowledge can be obtained, is to be found *Christian fellowship.* in the widely accepted doctrine of Christian fellowship. When two believers, who have long been close friends as well as devoted Christians, are parted by death, we can hardly think that an entire separation has been effected. While here they were the servants of one Master, and now, though one of them has departed, both are still in the same service. It has seemed to some that this separation by death is calculated to cause a closer and a more spiritual fellowship than can be developed while both parties remain in this world.

In urging his readers to put forth their most earnest efforts to secure the prize which God has offered to all who faithfully strive therefor, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of a great "cloud of witnesses" by *Interested witnesses.* whom they were encompassed and who were evidently watching their efforts with the deepest interest. It is probable that such an assemblage of witnesses are constantly watching the progress of the kingdom of God on earth. They note every movement of the great battle that is going on between sin and righteousness. They rejoice in every victory, and, though there is doubt-

less regret when the forces of evil prevail, it is softened by the knowledge that it is only a temporary triumph, that the contest is nearly over, and that the ultimate establishment of the right is fully assured.

It may be claimed that this great assemblage of sinless beings who, from some point unknown to us, are deeply interested witnesses of the fearful conflict which is now going on in the world, have their attention centred upon the great tragedy as a whole, and that they have no particular interest in any of the individual men and women who are taking part in the fray. Some believe that no one who has ever lived in this world has a place in that vast throng. They hold that for wise reasons all human souls are excluded, but that angels and other spiritual beings, of perhaps many different orders, are present in countless numbers. We have no doubt that such beings are watching the progress of events as they affect the advancement of the cause of Christ in this world. Naturally they would consider the conflict as a whole, and would have no special regard for particular individuals. But while there may not be sufficient evidence to prove that this is the case, we do not feel that the lines should be so closely drawn. We are inclined to think that at times the departed who were dear to us while they were here are members of that great number of beings who view the conflict, and that they are most deeply interested in the manner in which we are bearing our part in the strife.

Another subject of great interest, growing out of the relations of the dead and the living, is that of personal communication.

Personal communication. If it could be shown that the dead were cognizant of our affairs it would still remain true that we know but comparatively little of theirs, and it would not prove anything concerning the possibility of establishing communication with them. Many savage and barbarous tribes have thought that the soul did not perish at death. Some of these peoples have believed that dreams were caused by the presence of souls which visited the dreamer during sleep. The ripple of the brook and the sound of the waving leaves were imagined to be the voices of departed souls. It was the custom of one tribe of Indians, once in each year, to gather on some eminence and spend a day in intercourse with departed friends who came there to meet them. And many people of more advanced races, including

some eminent scholars in recent times, have held that under certain circumstances and to a limited extent it is possible to hold communication with the dead.

Many who believe in the doctrines of what is known as Spiritualism are confident that by the aid of persons who are known as mediums, and in some cases directly, conversations with the dead can be carried on. Many assert Spiritualism. that they have often received messages from departed friends, and not a few declare that they have seen in bodily form persons who had died many years before. But other people, equally desirous of hearing from their loved ones, have not been satisfied that the messages purporting to come from their friends were genuine.

While some of the mediums are undoubtedly honest, there are many who are low and vile. We have heard mediums of the latter class denounced by able Spiritualistic lecturers, and have read very pointed warnings against them in leading Spiritualistic papers. One writer, who represents the highest type of this belief, and who in many points is in entire harmony with the Scriptures, says: "It is to be at once conceded that there is much deliberate and intentional fraud, much unconscious and unintentional delusion, under the phase of mediumship,"¹ though she believes that there are honest and successful mediums and that, under certain conditions, direct communication with the departed is possible.

We admit that mediums perform many wonderful feats, but there are persons who equal most of their performances yet who assert that they have no help from outside influences, but bring into use only their own skill and dexterity. In the cases of the mediums who have had no special training in this direction it is fair to presume that they have powers with which people in general have not been endowed, or, what is far more probable, that these powers are at present in a dormant condition.

The appearance of ghosts, the mysterious rattling of windows and doors, the ringing of bells under peculiar circumstances, and various other phenomena which have often been credited to spiritual influences, have for many years been carefully investigated by eminent scientists both in this country and Europe. We believe that as yet the agency of departed spirits has not

¹ Lillian Whiting, *After Her Death*.

been demonstrated in a single instance. Some of these phenomena are very mysterious. But, judging from what has been learned in the past, it is probable that their explanation will be found in the working of natural laws rather than in the exercise of a supernatural agency.

Many instances in which communication between the dead and the living is said to have occurred, and numerous cases in which remarkable phenomena were observed, are very interesting. But when we consider the nature of much that is adduced as proof, the gigantic obstacles to communication between the inhabitants of the two realms, and also take into account the vast mass of negative testimony, we must say that the evidence does not appear sufficient to establish the claim which it is brought forward to support. Possibly the spirits of our departed friends may have some means of knowing of our affairs and of impressing helpful thoughts upon our minds. Possibly, too, they may be cheered by our loving remembrance. But we think that direct communication is very seldom, if ever, effected, and we cannot understand how a medium who never knew any of the parties in interest can, for a certain stipulated fee, bring the souls of the departed into such relations with their friends who remain here as to enable them to carry on conversation, or to either give or receive information of any kind.

It is an undoubted fact that a great many people have, in some mysterious manner, been warned of impending danger.

Presentiments. In many cases the persons so impressed attribute this warning to spiritual agency. Not a few claim that the impression has been made by the soul of a departed relative or friend. In many instances the presentiment has enabled the subject to protect himself against threatened ills and thus prolong his life. In others it has served to so turn the thoughts of the one impressed as to cause him to prepare for his approaching decease. There have been instances, too, in which it has had a great influence upon the last work which the man performed on earth.

Mozart's requiem. It is said that the requiem which added so much to the fame of the great musician, Mozart, was composed while he was under a strong impression that his earthly life was coming to a close. He had been employed by a stranger to

compose a requiem in memory of a friend who had recently died. Upon this theme he worked with intense devotion day and night. He became very ill, but continued his toil until the magnificent requiem was completed. He was impressed with the belief that the visitor who had engaged him to compose it came from another world for the purpose of warning him that death was near. He could not be persuaded that it was otherwise, but insisted that the requiem was for himself and that it should be played at his own funeral. It is a singular fact that the great composer died before the stranger called for the manuscript.

There are many well authenticated cases in which persons have impressed their own thoughts upon the minds of others who were at a considerable distance. In these instances none of the ordinary means of communication were used. Some of these cases are remarkable, almost marvelous, but as both parties were upon the earth it does not seem necessary to believe that any spiritual agency was concerned. It does, however, oblige us to admit that the range of the mental powers is far greater than has usually been supposed. *Telepathy.*

In the cases of the vast majority of men the power of "thought transference," as telepathy is often described, appears to be wholly wanting. Yet it is possible that the germ is in every human mind. If this supposition is correct, this power belongs to the spiritual nature of man and is a part of the equipment for the work which his Maker designed that he should perform. As it is seldom called into use here, it seems likely that it will be of service hereafter. Probably it will be one of the means of communication in the spiritual world when the parties are distant from each other.

While we think that many cases of presentiments, like that which we have related of Mozart, are caused by weakness of the physical system, there are many others in which some outside agency appears to be involved. We have no doubt that, in numberless instances, messengers are sent from God to warn men of impending danger, to keep them from the paths of vice, and to encourage them when despondent. Whether these messengers are our departed friends we cannot affirm, but we think it possible that, in times of our special needs, they may either be

near us or else, by means of the power of thought transference, they may assure us of their sympathy and love.

Our questions still remain unanswered. We cannot positively assert that our departed friends have a present knowledge of our affairs, though we are fully assured of their loving remembrance and continued interest. Neither can we be absolutely sure that the souls of any human beings are among the spirits which, we believe, God sends to aid and comfort His children in times of special stress and sorrow. But we do not dare to affirm, as one able writer has done, that "we have no reason to think that the human inhabitants of heaven are now in any way within the range of this world, or hover about it at any time or in any form."¹ It seems to us that the following opinion of a well-known writer, from whom we have several times quoted, — a writer, too, who was so conservative as to say that "God, for wise reasons, does not allow us to hold converse with those who have gone before," — is more reasonable, and also more in accordance with the general indications of the Scriptures: "Christianity . . . does not shut us off from the comfortable and inspiring hope and assurance that the redeemed, who loved us so much while we were still together in the flesh, are often near us and are assisting Christ in His high task of making all things work together for good to those who love God."²

A similar thought was beautifully expressed by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe in a poem entitled "The Other World," from which we quote as follows: —

"Sweet hearts around us throb and beat,
Sweet helping hands are stirred,
And palpitates the veil between
With breathings almost heard.

"The silence, awful, sweet, and calm
They have no power to break;
For mortal words are not for them
To utter or partake."

From various points of view we have considered the probable relationship in which those who have been called away now stand to the world at large, and more especially to the friends whom they left behind. We ought,

*Can we help our
departed friends?*

¹ Rev. R. M. Patterson, D. D., *Paradise*.

² Lewis French Stearns, *Present Day Theology*.

also, to consider the relationship in which we stand to them, and inquire whether it is possible for us to do anything that will promote their welfare or increase their happiness.

It is plain that, on account of the great change which has occurred in their condition, we cannot help our departed friends in many ways in which we were formerly able to assist them. Yet it may be that even now we can *Christian living.* add to their happiness. If they are still able to keep us in view, if they know of our circumstances and, in some measure, can read our minds, we can cheer them by raising our own lives to the highest possible spiritual plane. Every conquest which we make over sin will give them pleasure. Perhaps our yielding to temptation will cause them regret. Be this as it may, we should so live as not to disappoint those who have, for a season, been separated from us by death. If they do not know of us now they will see us ere long, and as the mask of the physical body is laid aside they will read our characters as they really are. This is not the highest motive for Christian living, but it is one that perhaps is worthy of more consideration than it usually receives.

There are many who hold that we can render a great service to the departed by means of prayer. This belief is held in many different forms. Some would limit prayer for the *Prayer by and for the departed.* dead to the heathen, and to those who in nominally Christian lands have not had the claims of the real Christ presented to them. In this number those who have been taught false doctrine are included. Others hold that we should pray only for those who, though imperfect when they died, left this world in a state of grace. In their opinion "the unbelieving and unholy dead" are not to be the objects of our petitions, as they are supposed to have passed beyond the reach of mercy. There are, too, many in all, who believe that it is right, and is a duty, to pray for all of the dead. But there are multitudes of others, including the great majority of the members of some large denominations of Christians, who believe that it is useless, and that it may be wrong, to offer prayer for those who have died. In their opinion the departed "are wholly beyond the reach of such means of grace as have been established by Christ for living men through the church."

It is a somewhat common belief that the righteous dead pray

for the friends who remain upon the earth. That they pray for the church on earth and for her speedy victory over her foes we cannot doubt. From the highest and noblest motives they desire the complete establishment of the kingdom into which no trace of evil can ever enter. And it is not impossible that they are stimulated to increased earnestness in this work by the fact that they must remain in a somewhat imperfect condition until they receive their bodies at the resurrection, which will not occur until the close of the present dispensation. In certain passages of the Revelation some of the saints are described as earnestly praying that the final triumph of the cause of Christ may be hastened on.

While we have full warrant in Scripture for the belief that the departed who have died in faith pray for the upbuilding of the church and the conversion of the world, we do not have quite as definite an assurance that they pray for their particular friends. Some quote the case of the rich man who desired of Abraham that a messenger might be sent to warn his brothers lest they should come to the "place of torment" which he had reached, but this evidence is inadmissible, partly because it throws no light upon the conduct of the righteous, with whom we now have to do, and also because the prayer was wrung from the one by whom it was offered by fear and remorse, of which the saved have no experience. But while we are obliged to admit that we have no definite statement in the Bible to the effect that our departed friends pray for us, "it is natural to suppose that they do so pray, and there is nothing in Scripture to conflict with such a supposition."¹

When we come to consider the other side of our subject we find much greater difficulties. The prayers of the departed may greatly benefit us, for we are in a state of probation. If those who have gone from us are in a similar state our prayers might help them. But we do not know that they are in such a state. For those who have known their duty while here, and have refused to perform it, there seems to be but little hope that they can be helped in any such way. We would not limit the love of God or the atonement of Christ. We hope that multitudes who have neglected the claims of religion have, as they reached the line which separates the two worlds, made a

*Probability that
the dead pray
for us.*

*Ought we to pray
for the dead?*

¹ Bishop L. N. Dahle, *Life after Death*.

decisive choice of the right and will be saved. But we dare not say that such will be the case.

In the Scriptures we find very little light upon the subject of prayers for the dead. The principal passage which can be quoted in favor of the practice is, we believe, the reference of the Apostle Paul to Onesiphorus: "The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day." *The Scriptures silent.* This, for a proof text, is vague and very unsatisfactory, and many writers assert that there is no evidence that the person named by the Apostle was dead when the epistle from which these words are taken was written. Still, we do not regard this reticence of the Bible as conclusive. Many things which are almost universally regarded by Christians as right and desirable are not explicitly taught in the Scriptures. The spirit that prompts the offering of prayer for the dead is to be commended. The sentiment is kindly and the purpose is helpful. But we do not see our way clear to accept the conclusions of those who favor the practice.

The custom of praying for the dead was observed, to some extent, by the Jews about two centuries before the coming of Christ. Some assert that it was quite common in His time, and that, though He condemned some of the doctrines which then prevailed, there is no evidence that He disapproved of this practice. *An early custom.* In the early church prayers for departed friends who had died in the faith were sometimes offered. The custom appears to have been more particularly observed on the anniversary of the death of those for whom prayer was offered, and at communion seasons. In the course of time it seems to have developed into the doctrine of purgatory, and later into practices, like the sale of indulgences, which could not be tolerated in a pure system of Christianity.

As regarded by the Roman Catholic Church, by which it is considered one of the most important features of its religious system, and by individual members of other denominations, purgatory is a place in which souls which *Purgatory.* are not fitted to enter heaven, but which have not gone so far in sin that return to God is endangered, may, by means of discipline and suffering, expiate their guilt. The doctrine is not new. It can be traced far back in the literature of the Hindus. As stated therein, all sin must be expiated by suffering on the

part of the sinner. The degree of pain would be determined by, and accurately adjusted to, the degree of guilt, though it was supposed that by means of prayers, and offerings, and good deeds by children remaining upon earth, the period which their parents had been condemned to suffer might be shortened.

A somewhat similar belief has, at various times, been held by the Persians, the Chinese, the Jews, and various other peoples. Traces of it appeared in the early Christian church, but several centuries passed before it became established as a powerful means of advancing the interests of its officers and increasing its revenues. In the sixth century the doctrine had become so matured and formulated as to give to "the representatives of the church an almost unlimited power over purgatory." Its influence increased until it reached a stage at which, "from the ninth to the sixteenth century, no doctrine was so central, prominent, and effective in the common teaching and practice of the church, no fear was so widely spread and vividly felt in the bosom of Christendom, as the doctrine and the fear of purgatory."¹

If the doctrine of purgatory is true, the souls that are undergoing discipline in its realm have a deep interest in the affairs of this world, and especially in their relatives and friends who remain upon earth, as the latter can do much to mitigate their condition. Some, though not all, of the expounders of this doctrine claim that the suffering is caused by literal fire. In any case there is great pain, and this pain must continue until the guilt of the sinner is expiated by his suffering or his soul is released by the sacrifices of the mass, which are paid for by some one interested in his welfare, by fastings and prayers, and good works performed on his behalf, by securing the intercessions of saints and a transfer of their good works to the credit of the soul, or by other means which are prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church.

We do not find such a doctrine in the Scriptures, and we believe that its advocates do not claim that it is really supported

*Not a biblical
doctrine.*

in what Protestants regard as the canonical books. The very few passages in the New Testament which have been quoted in its behalf do not sustain such a theory as purgatory represents. As we read the words of Christ and His Apostles we are impressed with the belief that no amount of

¹ William R. Alger, *Doctrine of a Future Life*.

suffering on the part of the guilty — no payments for masses, no prayers, and no good works by others — can atone for sin. Forgiveness may be secured by faith in Christ, but this faith must be exercised by the sinner himself. No one can act for him in this respect.

The leaders of the Reformation condemned the doctrine of purgatory in the most emphatic terms, but they were not so pronounced in their expression of opinion regarding prayers for the dead. It appears, however, that the practice rapidly declined. It is said that at one of the first of the imposing funerals which were held in England after the Reformation the words of the old form, "Pray for the soul" of the departed were omitted, and instead the herald proclaimed "Blessed be the King of Eternal Glory, who through His divine mercy hath translated the most High, Puissant, and Victorious Prince Henry II., late the French King, from this earthly to His Heavenly Kingdom." Many of the Protestant leaders at this time, and during several centuries following, seemed to regard prayer for the dead as "both useless and inadmissible," though there were others who looked upon it as a matter of little consequence.

In the Roman Catholic Church the custom of praying for the dead is almost universal. In most Protestant denominations it is seldom observed in public, though how many of their individual members pray for departed friends no one can tell. In the Protestant Episcopal Church it is more common than in other Protestant communions, though it is not often made a special public service. In 1897, however, an elaborate service of this kind was held in a prominent church of this denomination in one of our large cities. According to the newspaper report of this solemn observance, "The Guild of All Souls, the object of which is to pray for the dead, and to offer masses for the repose of their souls, chanted the vespers of the dead." The subject of the sermon was "The Holy Souls in Purgatory," and the preacher declared that the living could aid these souls "by prayer, penances, and by the offering up in their behalf the holy sacrifices of the altar."

It seems evident that we cannot pray for the departed as we do for the living. We know so little of their special needs that we cannot properly ask for things which under other conditions

we might name. But it seems to us that we have a right to
What is thank God for all that our dear departed ones were
admissible. to us in this life, and to ask that in such place and
such manner as He sees to be right and best, His mercy, which
“endureth for ever,” may be granted unto them in most abundant
measure.

PART VI

THE COMING OF THE LORD

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

IN preceding pages we have endeavored to show that conscious existence continues after death. Those who, in common language, are spoken of as dead we believe to be *The real man not laid in the grave.* alive and active. It is a great mistake to think of them as in their graves. Unless he was buried alive, no man was ever covered in the grave. When the body is laid in the grave the man himself is elsewhere or he has passed out of existence. We hold that he still lives.

It has also been noted that some of the nations of antiquity had a dim hope of a continued life in the body after death. Various uncivilized races in later times have also had *A divine revelation.* a hope that something akin to the present form of existence would follow the departure of the soul from the present world. But the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has never been clearly defined and fully believed apart from a divine revelation. It appeared dimly in the Old Testament and in the Apocrypha, and was held by many of the Jews in the time of Christ. There had been hopes, and surmises, but no approach to an unqualified declaration of the truth of the doctrine until it was revealed by the Creator.

Christ claimed to be able to raise the dead. In several instances He manifested this power, sometimes in the presence of numerous witnesses. He called back to life persons *The claim; and promise of Christ.* who had died, and one who had not only died but had been buried. These persons, however, came back to the old, earthly life, and were still subject to the law of physical death. They would be obliged to again pass through the great

experience which to the vast majority of mortals comes only once. But Christ promised His disciples a life which should be very different from this, and which should never end. He foretold His own death and assured His hearers that He would afterward appear to them alive in this world. He gave them the promise that, because of their union with Him, they too should rise from their graves, that their souls should be joined to their glorified bodies, and that thenceforth they were to abide with Him forever. He came to save man, body as well as soul, from evil. Therefore we must regard His resurrection not only as a pledge that those who believe in Him will have an endless and a blessed life, but also as constituting a part of His great work for the salvation of mankind.

Many believers in the doctrine of the resurrection have held that the "self-same bodies" which are buried will be reformed and reunited with the souls which formerly occupied them. This view is inconsistent with science, which shows that after burial the body soon decomposes and that in the course of time only a small quantity of inorganic material remains. Much of the matter of which the body was composed has been dissipated in the air, or has entered other combinations. Sooner or later plants may appropriate both the organic and the inorganic materials, these plants may be consumed by animals, and they, in turn, may be used to sustain the life of other creatures. Thus a ceaseless round may distribute the particles of the body until they have entered many and widely different forms. And so the changes may go on until the elements of which a certain human body was composed may be scattered over the continents and the oceans of the world. Revelation teaches the same doctrine. The idea that we are to have the same bodies after the resurrection that we have now is shown by the Apostle Paul to be untrue when he declares that it is not the same body that is raised, but one of a very different kind.

The fact that both science and revelation teach that we are not to have the identical bodies in the future life which we had on earth should not occasion regret. We do not understand how people can desire to retain forever the bodies which, in this world, often are, and are constantly liable to be, racked by pain, wasted by illness, or deformed by accident or disease. It seems far better to lay such bodies aside when we die.



THE FIRST EASTER MORNING.

Whatever knowledge we obtain of the nature of the new bodies which we are to have in the resurrection must be acquired, either directly or indirectly, from the Scriptures. We cannot accept the statements of Spiritualistic mediums who profess to have seen great numbers of the dead in the bodies which they now have, and presumably are to have forever. Neither can we believe, with Swedenborg and his followers, that the resurrection immediately follows death, the old body disappearing and the new body, an almost perfect counterpart of the other, immediately taking its place. Neither is there any other source outside of the Bible from which we believe that reliable information upon this point can be obtained.

*Information only
from the
Scriptures.*

In their descriptions of the resurrection bodies the Scriptures have to do almost entirely with those of the righteous. They say but little in respect to the bodies of those who are classed with the wicked. That in form the new body will bear some marked resemblance to the one which the soul has tenanted upon earth we consider beyond a doubt. This likeness is probable because it will facilitate the recognition of each other by those who were acquainted while here — a doctrine which may be regarded as established beyond a doubt. Yet, while in some respect similar, the bodies of the righteous will be immeasurably superior to those which they had on earth. The Apostle Paul speaks of them as being in the likeness of the glorified body of Christ. The new body will be incorruptible. No sickness will ever afflict it, no accident can ever cause it injury, and it will never be subject to pain. The natural laws to which our earthly bodies are subject will either be abrogated after the resurrection or the bodies which are then received will be superior to them. They will be fully adapted to the kind of life that is to be lived and to the conditions under which it is to be continued. The bodies of the wicked, also, will doubtless be of such form and nature as to enable them to serve the purposes for which they were designed.

*Bodies of the
righteous and
the wicked.*

That the resurrection of the dead is such a stupendous event as almost to surpass belief cannot be denied. And yet it is not as great a mystery as the creation of life. It is much easier to think that life can go on in a bodily form after a break in its continuity caused by death than it is to con-

*A stupendous
event.*

ceive of its beginning. The great miracle is not in the continuance of existence but in the appearance of life at all. Yet it is plain to all that at some point in the history of the universe life commenced. The resurrection is the persistence of a process which, so far as its form is concerned, has been interrupted. The creation was something wholly new.

When Christ rose from the dead there were some who denied the reality of His appearance. From that time to this there have been doubters, but they have been comparatively few, and as knowledge has increased and the circumstances have been more carefully investigated and the evidences have been more closely scrutinized, their number has decreased. *Proof of the resurrection of Christ.* Proofs that Christ actually rose from the dead are incontestable. He was publicly crucified. The fact of His death was made doubly sure by the spear-thrust of a Roman soldier. Then His body was placed in a tomb which was closed and sealed, and over which a military guard was stationed. And yet the body which this tomb had contained mysteriously disappeared. The only means by which His enemies appear to have endeavored to explain this disappearance was the assertion that the disciples had stolen the body. This "tale was too infamous for credence, and too ridiculous for publicity," and those who had tried to spread it soon saw their mistake and endeavored to keep the matter as secret as possible.

The character of Christ should have been, in itself, a sufficient answer to every doubt as to the reality of His return from the grave. He had promised that He would appear again to His disciples. He had been the greatest of benefactors of the race. He had lived the purest life — the only perfect life — of any man in this world, and it was utterly inconceivable that He should have attempted to delude His followers. And His promises have been fulfilled. In ten different instances He appeared after His death. At one time He came into the presence of eleven of His disciples, at another He appeared to twelve, and a little later to more than five hundred. Some of these persons saw Him several times during the forty days which He passed upon the earth after His resurrection. It would have been utterly impossible even for the most accomplished deceiver to appear so often, in such public places, and in the presence of so many witnesses, and yet retain the confidence of those whom he

desired to attach to himself. There can be no possible doubt that Christ returned to this world in bodily form after the separation of His soul and body by death.

The moral effect of the return of Christ from the dead was such as to prove most convincing to all who had considered His claims. Before His crucifixion even the disciples *The effect upon His disciples.* who had followed Him most closely were weak and faltering. In the supreme hour of His trial they each and all deserted Him. They believed that His death was the utter ruin of His and their hopes, and that everything connected with His cause had been utterly destroyed. But after His resurrection these men who had proved so weak and vacillating, who had given up everything for lost and returned to their fishing boats, became the bravest of the brave. They went from place to place, endured persecution, imprisonment, beatings, and abuse of every kind; yet wherever they tarried, even for the shortest period, they preached Jesus Christ and boldly proclaimed His resurrection from the dead. And thus they continued to preach and to teach until their earthly lives came to a close.

The superiority of the soul to the body has been dwelt upon in preceding chapters. It has been shown that the body is the instrument of the soul during the life of man in this world. Yet though of secondary, it is of great, importance. *Why a resurrection is required.* It is something without which he cannot live in the present state of being. Some who have supposed that its main purpose is served here have questioned why it should not be allowed to perish utterly. But it is evident that the design of God was that man, both here and hereafter, should have a bodily form. He created man, body and soul, and the redemptive work of Christ has reference to both.

Concerning the exact time at which the resurrection of the dead will occur there is, among those who fully believe in the doctrine, a wide difference of opinion. Probably *When the resurrection will occur.* the great majority believe that it will take place when Christ comes to judge the world. Some hold that there are to be two resurrections, one of which affects only the righteous, and is to occur at the advent of Christ and the establishment of His millennial kingdom. Others do not regard the resurrection as taking place at some set time, but consider it a progressive event which commences immediately after death and proceeds

to completion with greater or lesser rapidity, according to the character of the soul and the degree of effort which it had made to perform its duty in this world.

Whether the resurrection immediately follows death, or is deferred for an indefinite period, it is certain that it will be effected by the power of Jesus Christ. Many have held that the resurrection will be universal; but there are some who claim that it will not extend to the wicked, whom they believe will utterly perish at death. Others have thought that they will be raised from the dead and, either immediately or after having endured a sufficient degree of punishment for their sins, be forever destroyed.

It is true that there can be no good life, no life that is rich and full, and that can satisfy the soul, apart from Christ, and that the soul that is separated from Him may be properly spoken of as dead even while it lives in this world. Still, we cannot believe that on this account the soul will perish when it leaves the body. Christ stands in such a relation to every human being as to insure the reunion of its soul and body after death. He died for every member of the human race, and because of His death, and the relations established thereby between God and man, it is both fitting and necessary that all men should rise from the dead.

Whether the resurrection of the dead will be simultaneous or progressive, it may be said to occur at a definite time, for, even if progressive, it will reach a culmination in an event which will be accompanied by the most imposing manifestations. That all souls will wait for their bodies until this time we are not certain. But there is something of solemn significance in the statement of Christ that those who are then alive shall "see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." If, as some assume, there is in this description something of Oriental imagery, we may be certain that there will be a great culmination which, in all respects, will fully answer the New Testament representations of the coming of the Lord and a general resurrection.

It is a mistake to suppose, as many have done, that the new

body will be immaterial. That it will be of a much higher nature, and have vastly greater powers than the present body, there can be no doubt. Indeed, its quality will be so far superior to the earthly body that it may properly be called spiritual. The Apostle Paul teaches that this spiritual body will present a very different appearance from the one which was occupied by the soul before death, when he says, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The resurrection is that of the person, not that of the material body which he tenanted before he died. Those who are alive at the coming of Christ will, it is said, be changed, a fact which strongly supports the doctrine that the identical bodies which were used upon earth will not be restored.

While it is a different body which appears in the resurrection state, it will certainly be a body which has a very close connection, and an element of continuity, with the one that is laid in the grave. It will be wonderfully improved, yet will so closely resemble the earthly body as to continue the identity of the person and make it to all intents and purposes his own body. This body will, in every way, be adapted to his needs, and will have a vital connection with the soul. It is a part of the man himself, but in all considerations of the resurrection it is the individual, and not the body that was used on earth, that is to be regarded as of the principal importance.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

It has been a common belief among mankind that at some future time there would be passed upon the deeds done in the body a judgment by a superior power from the decision of which it would be impossible to escape. *A general expectation.* The ancient Egyptians looked forward to a minute and impartial judgment after death. Elaborate representations of this judgment are pictured upon the interior walls of many of their massive tombs. All the actions of the dead were believed to be weighed in the balance before the great god Osiris, and the destiny of the soul was determined by the result of this judicial test. The Greeks, Parsees, Mohammedans, and numerous peoples of other nationalities and of other forms of faith were fully convinced that after death there would be a solemn review of all the deeds of the present life and that the final destiny of the soul would then and there be revealed.

In the Christian system of religion, the one with which we especially have to do, the idea of the judgment has always been a very prominent doctrine. *A prominent doctrine of Christianity.* In the Old Dispensation, too, which the present system followed, and out of which it largely grew, there was an emphatic and often reiterated proclamation of a judgment upon the lives and deeds of men. In the earlier ages, however, the penalties of sin were largely of a temporal nature. Prosperity was held up as the reward of obedience, and adversity was threatened as the punishment of violation of the Divine law. And it is a fact with which every careful reader of history is familiar, that during this period many and terrible judgments were inflicted upon the Jews and also upon various other peoples which insolently and persistently trampled upon the principles of truth and righteousness.

With the coming of Christ there was a clearer and fuller manifestation of the character of God. Men were urged to seek a higher plane of life. They were taught that the material and

the temporal should be largely superseded by the spiritual and the eternal. In the New Testament the idea of a judgment which was not to occur in the present but which should take place at some future period and in some locality unknown to mortals was, almost at the beginning, brought into prominence, and it was kept in view until the sacred canon was complete. In the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew we have, in the words of Christ Himself, a vivid description of the last judgment. In the twentieth chapter of the Revelation of Saint John, the Apostle tells of his magnificent vision of the resurrection of the dead and of the judgment which immediately followed. Numerous other references by Christ, and by the writers of the various books of the New Testament, were also made to this judgment which awaits the individual and the race.

Christ not only described the scenes of the coming judgment in the most solemn and impressive manner, but He also emphasized the fact that the day upon which it should occur would be the day of all days for mankind. He repeatedly spoke of it as "that day," thus setting it apart from all other days in its importance. There have been some attempts to modify this doctrine, but the apparent teaching certainly is that when that day shall come time will cease and an irrevocable decree concerning the destiny of each and every member of the human race will be proclaimed. *The great day.*

The passages of Scripture relating to the judgment have been variously interpreted and several theories have been formed. Probably a larger number than those who accept any other view expect that the judgment will immediately follow the resurrection and will be the final act in the history of the world. Many believe that the soul is judged as soon as it enters the unseen realm. This, because they suppose from what the Scriptures tell us regarding Moses and Elijah, from the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus, and from numerous other statements and intimations, that to some extent both the good and the bad enter upon conditions of reward or punishment immediately after death, and it is hardly to be expected that after enjoying its reward or suffering its punishment for a long period the soul is to be brought before its judge for acquittal or condemnation. *Various theories.*

Then, too, there are many who hold that during the period between death and the judgment vast numbers of souls which had rejected Christ on earth will become His loving subjects. They also believe that those who followed Christ on earth will during this time make great advances in the divine life. Therefore they believe that the judgment will be deferred until the close of the present dispensation. For, if their inferences are correct, what would be fair if the soul were judged at death would be manifestly unjust at a later period in its history.

There are some who hold the theory that judgment commences here and is in constant progress from the point at which moral accountability begins. Day by day the conduct of the individual goes to make up the character which he is forming. His acquaintances judge him, and his conscience judges him, according to what he does or fails to do. "Every day is a judgment day" to some extent, but no one fully knows the character of another, and the full measure of its deserts is never known in this world by the soul itself. Therefore its own judgment must be of the most imperfect kind and must be supplemented by one in future in which the judge is both impartial and all-wise.

The biblical descriptions of the judgment are by many held to be very largely figurative. The scenic wonders, the visible appearance of Christ in the heavens with a multitude of angels, the gathering of all the countless millions of the members of the human family from the beginning of the race to the end of time at some particular spot, and the public announcement of the justification or condemnation of each individual, they hold make a vivid Oriental picture, rather than a literal description, of what is to occur when the final awards shall be made and the good and the wicked shall be forever separated. It is possible that the scene is highly colored, but when we consider the solemnity with which the subject was treated by Christ, and throughout the New Testament wherever reference to it is made, and remember the tremendous issues which then reach a final determination, we incline to the belief that the descriptions in the Bible have not been overdrawn.

In the description by the Apostle John of the resurrection and judgment we read that "books were opened" and that "the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the

Biblical descriptions figurative or literal?

books, according to their works." This, of course, is largely imagery. The idea which some have held, that there were real books in which all the thoughts and words and deeds of each individual were written down, cannot be entertained for a moment. But it is probable that the human soul itself is the book, and that upon it everything pertaining to its earthly existence is inscribed. *The judgment books.*

De Quincey has said that "no such thing as forgetting is possible to the mind," and there are strong reasons for accepting his statement. Probably every reader has had flash into the mind the recollection of things which had been, as we commonly say, "forgotten" for many years. People in danger of sudden death, but who have escaped with their lives, have asserted that in the brief period during which they seemed to be passing away from the world the whole panorama of life has unrolled before them, and that every thought and deed appeared to be presented to the mind. Such instances are altogether too numerous and too well authenticated to leave a doubt as to the fact that the experiences were not only genuine, but that they were perfectly natural. What has occurred in these instances, it is fair to suppose, would occur in any number of other cases in which the conditions were similar.

During His earthly ministry Christ was often asked to decide questions upon which there was a difference of opinion on the part of those who submitted them. When these questions related to the duty of man toward God, or toward his fellow men, Christ never refused, nor hesitated, to give the light desired. But when they had to do with merely temporal affairs He invariably declined to interfere. He plainly told those who approached Him in matters of this kind that such things were wholly foreign to the character of His work on earth, but time and again, in the most emphatic manner, He assured His hearers that at the last great day He would judge the world. And throughout the New Testament He is mentioned as the One to whom this great work of judgment had been assigned. *Christ the judge.*

To those who accept the doctrine that Christ is divine, as well as human, there seems an eminent fitness in the fact that He is to judge mankind. Knowing as God alone can know the wickedness and desert of sin, and as only man can know by experience the strength of the temptations to which *Why Christ should Judge.*

the race is exposed and the weakness of our common humanity, He is able to judge at once righteously and sympathetically. Because He was the "Son of Man," and knew the infirmities and weakness of our human nature, God made Him the judge of men. He knew, and showed to man, precisely what every human being should be. He passed through the common experiences of this earthly life, maintaining a perfect character, and offering to give all needed assistance to those who would trust and follow Him.

Many representations of the judgment have assumed that, so far as the unrighteous are concerned, it will be largely one of vengeance. One of the most famous of the large number of paintings of this scene shows Christ in the act of pronouncing the curse upon the unrepentant without the least expression of pity or compassion upon His countenance. This we believe to be a wholly erroneous view. If at last any depart from Him they will go as the result of their own choice. While upon earth the heart of Christ was filled with love and pity, even for those who deliberately refused to become His disciples. As He looked upon the Holy City, which He knew was ere long to be destroyed, He uttered that memorable lamentation: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" And we are assured by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever." That He must exclude from His perfected kingdom all who continue in rebellion against Him is clear. But the exclusion will not be arbitrary, and it will not be made without regret by the judge. At the last day, as well as when He was upon earth, the only reason that Christ does not gather all souls unto Himself will be the simple one that when they had the opportunity and the invitation to come to Him they "would not."

Many and diverse results of vast importance will flow from this great judgment of the world. This tremendous event will close the present dispensation. When its decrees are pronounced the Gospel age will come to an end. Time will be destroyed and eternity will begin. So far as this world is concerned, human history will be closed. The earth

Character of the judgment.

The results of the judgment.

itself will have passed through the last changes, or else these transformations will take place in immediate connection with the judgment day. The glory of Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer of men will be manifested and the kingdom of God will be forever established. The ways of God, and all of His dealings with individuals, and with the race, will be fully vindicated, and the whole universe will see and acknowledge that in all things He has done right. Wickedness, so long defiant, and so often victorious, will be forever overthrown, and the kingdom of God will be consummated in a magnificent and eternal triumph.

As to the locality in which the final judgment will be held we have no definite information. There is, however, reason to suppose that the present world will be the scene of this event. That it will immediately follow the general resurrection is clear, but this fact throws no light upon the subject of its locality.

Where the judgment will take place.

In earlier times it was quite generally believed, and at the present day there are many who hold the same theory, that the judgment is to occur in the air and during the period in which the world is passing through the great changes which it must undergo in connection with the mighty events of the last day. But from the fact that this world has been the place where man has lived, where his character has been formed, and where the deeds for which he is to be judged have been committed; and also because it was here that He who is to be the judge endured the suffering, humiliation, and death which formed a part of His redemptive work, — it seems eminently fitting that here, too, should be the place of His glorious triumph.

Concerning the duration of the final judgment we know as little as we do regarding the locality in which it is to occur. The Mohammedans have sometimes taught that the day would extend to at least one thousand years. Sometimes they have lengthened the period to fifty thousand years. The fact that the Scriptures refer to it as a day is no criterion as to the measure of time which it will require. The days of the creation, mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis, are now known to have been, not days of twenty-four hours each, but days which covered vast periods of time. And there is no reason to think, as many have done, that the judgment will be

Duration of the judgment.

commenced and completed in the measure of time that is represented by one of our ordinary days. The Scriptures tell us that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Consequently, when the term "day" is used in the Bible we are not required to believe that it means just twenty-four hours. Its real meaning is that the period which it represents is continuous from beginning to end. Whether the judgment is progressive, and is now being held, or is to be deferred to the end of the world, it will have no break. There will be no adjournment of the court until everything pertaining to its work is decided.

Whether every sin which is committed will be brought to light in the day of judgment, and be made known to the assembled universe, is a question which has attracted much attention. Many have taught that this will be the case. Various passages of Scripture have been cited in its support, such as "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil," and others of a similar import. But there are many other passages which give an altogether different impression. God promises to "blot out" the transgressions of His people. He assures them that He "will not remember" their sins. In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, we are told of those whose "iniquities are forgiven," and we are assured that if we confess our sins God will not only forgive us but will "cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Such assurances certainly justify the belief that all of the iniquities of the righteous will not be brought before the public gaze. To each individual there will undoubtedly come a clear and minute revelation of its real character. Every thought, and everything pertaining to its life and deeds, will be remembered. Every mask will fall away and, perhaps for the first time in its history, the soul will know itself as it is. This will be true of the good and of the wicked. But so far as public exposure is concerned, except in cases where it is necessary on account of the connection of other parties with some evil deed, it is probable that what will appear will be a clear and unmistakable revelation of the general character, either as good or bad, rather than a public exhibition of everything which has made the soul what it has become.

Whatever the order of the judgment may be, whether it is a present and a constant process and will so continue until the resurrection, or whether it is to occur either as a culmination of this process or as an event set for some specific point of time in the far distant future, we may be sure that the sentence that will be pronounced will be one which will involve the separation of the wicked from the good. There will come a time at which the choices for good or for evil will have become so firmly established that separation will be as natural as it will be desirable for both parties. And it is probable that the command to the wicked to depart from the judge, and from those who have been found righteous, will be as truly a permission as a decree. They will go to their "own place" not wholly and not principally because they are obliged to do so, but because they will be less miserable there than they would be elsewhere — even in heaven.

It is a very common belief that death is a finality so far as the condition of the human soul is concerned. Many, however, hold that until the judgment the door of mercy is open, and some believe, or at least hope, that it is never closed. It seems to us that for those who have the Gospel here and who do not, even in the last moment of life, accept Christ as their Saviour, there can be but little hope. And we fear that there will be no change of character, and consequently of destiny, after the sentence of the judge has been pronounced. Yet we have no doubt that God will receive a soul whenever it repents. But it seems to us that there is great danger, an almost absolute certainty, that long before the judgment occurs the character of those who die without having been reconciled to God will become so fixed that the possibility of repentance will have forever passed away.

The sentence of separation.

Is the judgment a finality?

CHAPTER XXX

THE LARGER HOPE

MANY able sermons have been preached, and numerous essays and books have been written, to show that probation for all men is irrevocably closed at death. No matter by what influences one had been surrounded, what truths or what errors he had been taught, or whether his opportunities to secure salvation had been ample or deficient, if he passed out of this world without a living union with Jesus Christ his soul was lost beyond redemption. There have been periods when this doctrine was generally held by the members of large and influential denominations of Christians, and in recent times it has been preached, and it is still proclaimed, from many pulpits.

The limit of probation.

Such a doctrine finds support in certain passages of the Scriptures, but it is not in harmony with their teaching as a whole. It does not commend itself to the moral sense of mankind, and it does not accord with the character of the Creator as it is manifested in His works in the visible world. In its behalf great stress has been laid upon the fact that God is just. It was asserted, though the evidence of the considerable number of eminent theologians who made the assertion never indicated how such a thing was possible, that God could and would justly condemn to endless perdition unnumbered millions of infants, and of adults who never heard of Him through whom alone salvation can be secured.

In recent times the number who hold the doctrine that the souls of many who die in infancy are lost, and that the probation of all who arrive at the period of moral accountability closes at death, has been greatly diminished. Men have come to take different views of justice itself, and to see that, important as it is, this is only one of many attributes of the character of God. Mercy, tenderness, and compassion are as fully predicated of Him in the Bible as justice, and, as is often shown therein, very often modify that element of His character.

A modification of doctrine.

As men have dwelt more upon the dealings of God with His ancient people, and have studied more carefully the life and work, the hopes and desires, and the purposes of Christ in His mission to this world, many of them have come to take a much broader and more hopeful view than was formerly held of the destiny of vast numbers of the human race. The doctrine which these men hold is known as "The Larger Hope," and also by other similar, but somewhat indefinite terms. But there is a very wide difference in the form in which it is stated. Some claim that the Scriptures, when properly interpreted, not only in respect to their language but also as they are illuminated by the works and apparent purposes of God as they are revealed in the natural world, warrant a far more inclusive hope than others feel justified in cherishing. There are those who would be overjoyed to open the door of hope to its very widest limit, but who do not feel that God has authorized them to do so. They feel their responsibility as teachers and interpreters of the Word, and they are to be honored for holding fast to their convictions.

We could, if it were desirable, quote a large number of statements from various confessions of faith, and the writings of prominent theologians, to show that the theory that the infant children of unbelievers, and the heathen at large, pass at death into an endless hell has been very widely taught, and has been accepted by the mass of those who form the membership of many powerful religious organizations. We shall be content to give only two such quotations. "The scholastic Calvinists of the seventeenth century mounted the Alpine heights of eternal decrees with intrepid courage, and reveled in the reverential contemplation of the sovereign majesty of God, which seemed to require the damnation of the great mass of sinners, including untold millions of heathen and infants, for the manifestation of his terrible justice."¹ "The great scriptural doctrine that this is the only place of probation to the members of our fallen race, and that those who die out of Christ are lost forever, sets before our minds an awful view of the destiny that awaits the majority of the living generation of our race. . . . It bids us to keep in mind that the time is short within which there can be anything done to save the six hundred millions of heathen, and the three or four millions of Mohammedans, and

¹ Rev. Philip Schaff, D. D., *The Harmony of the Reformed Confessions*.

dead formalists, and heartless unbelievers, who are now hastening to the close of their probationary life without any preparation for a happy eternity.”¹

We believe that the Bible warrants a great deal larger and broader hope than this. We agree with the great number of Bible students, and preachers, and writers, who hold that God has made ample provision for the salvation of all who die in infancy, and that the heathen will either be saved without a probation or that they will be given such clear and comprehensive views of Christ that they can and will intelligently accept or reject Him. For those who have had the full light of the Gospel in this world, and have deliberately rejected the claims of Christ, they hold that no clearly defined expectation of final salvation can be entertained. Thus far we can go in full sympathy and strong conviction with those who hold this form of the doctrine of the Larger Hope.

There are many who believe in a second, or as it might be better expressed, a continued probation, for those who reject Christ in this world. They hold that so far as moral decisions are concerned death is not a finality. The man who had but little light here will have a brighter illumination of the truth hereafter. Mighty agencies for the spread of the Gospel will be in active exercise, and countless numbers who failed, or who refused, to come to Christ here will, in the unseen realm, become His loving subjects. A large number of those who hold this view believe that the possibilities of repentance and salvation remain until the judgment. When that great event occurs the destiny of the soul will be irrevocably determined.

There are many others who hold a still broader view. They not only believe that the door of mercy stands open forever, but also hold that active efforts for the salvation of souls will never cease unless there is universal submission to the will of God. For those who refuse to yield, the punishment of sin continues. But it is supposed that this punishment, together with the other means which are constantly employed for the purpose, will at length win every soul, and from that point the eternal safety and happiness of every member of the human race will be assured.

¹ Rev. Robert W. Patterson, D. D., in *A Sermon preached before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, in 1859.*



CHRIST OR DIANA?

With the view above stated we cannot agree. This, not because we do not ardently desire that it may be true, but because we do not think it is sustained by the Word of God. *Universal redemption.* But we do believe in the doctrine of universal redemption. We believe that Christ died for all, and that His salvation is sufficient for every member of the human race. We believe that "God is love," and that it is His earnest wish that every human soul should yield to Him in perfect trust and love, and in return receive from Him peace and happiness which will know neither measure nor end.

The facts of the infinite love of God for the human race, of the great sacrifice on Calvary, and of the work of the Holy Spirit, have led many to believe that His purposes *If God rules the world.* will be fulfilled, that every soul will be saved, that sin which is so obnoxious to him will disappear, and that the utter extinction of evil from the universe will eventually be accomplished. Some who hold this theory have gone so far as to assert that if these ends are not compassed, and every soul of man is not saved, God has created a world which He is unable to control. As this alternative is not to be considered, they hold that at some period, perhaps in the very far distant future, the last wandering soul will be brought back to Him, and that the innumerable millions of the human race, not one missing, will become citizens in the kingdom of God.

It is common to speak of God as almighty, yet there are things which even He cannot do. He cannot break his promises, and He cannot do any wrong. And in His *The soul must be free to choose.* dealings with unrepentant souls there are certain limitations of His power. He has made man free to choose good or evil, and this fact He can neither ignore nor change. So long as the will of man is in fixed and determined opposition to that of his Maker, it is impossible for their relations to be peaceful. From the very nature of His character, God cannot change. He must forever remain the Ruler of the universe. And if man will not yield to Him there is no possible ground for reconciliation. "No man can be saved against his will, because salvation is the conformity of his free will to the eternal and immutable moral law."¹ If man were compelled to repent of sin and obey his Creator, he would, on account of that com-

¹ Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., in *That Unknown Country*.

pulsion cease to be a free moral agent and become a mere machine in the control of a power that was mightier than his own. Nothing of this kind can occur. So far as his own personal salvation is concerned, it is within the power of man to thwart the wish and the purpose of Almighty God.

That as human character is formed it tends to become permanent is a matter of common observation. Little by little, as the individual increases in age, the habits of thought and action take certain forms which grow more and more sharply defined as the days and years go by. In the vast majority of cases the character gets its "bent" in youth. The membership of our churches is very largely recruited from the ranks of the young. Philanthropists, too, have found that labor among children is vastly more efficient than is work of the same nature with adults. Before the character becomes fixed, it is comparatively easy to induce a person to vary from his usual course. But it is exceedingly difficult to persuade an aged person to make a radical change, because, for a long period, his habits have been taking form as the molten iron takes the form of the mould, and his character has become almost as inflexible as the iron itself.

Wherever man is found there is always in operation a law which causes people of similar tastes, and habits, and desires to associate with each other. In civilized communities churches, societies; clubs, and various other organizations are formed by people who are congenial to each other. The man of religious character seeks the church, while his neighbor, whose desires are centred on present pleasure rather than on God, will find a society whose members have the same end in view. And so it is with every grade of character. From the purest to the vilest, men seek the companionship of others like themselves.

The facts that character tends to become permanent, and that the law of association strongly tends to draw the good and the bad into classes by themselves, are strongly opposed to the theory that there will be repentance after death. The man who rejects the call of God until death will enter the next world with just the same character and disposition that he had here. The man who chooses wicked companions here will prefer the same kind of company

Character tends to permanence.

The law of association.

Opposed to the doctrine of a change of character after death.

in the unseen world. We do not see how death can make the slightest difference with men in these respects. So, if we were to admit all that those who hold the doctrine of the Larger Hope claim as to the door of mercy being left open to all who have died unrepentant, we cannot be certain that any who have rejected God here will have the desire, or the moral power, to turn to Him there. The heart may be so hardened as to fail to receive good impressions, and the will may have become so fixed by constant opposition, or so enfeebled by long-continued vacillation, that a decisive choice may have become impossible.

In the natural world there appears to be a law of repair. A region devastated by fire or desolated by a flood is in the course of years, under the beneficent processes of nature, again restored to its former beauty and productiveness. *A ray of hope.*

Something that is akin to this we find in the moral world. Although iniquity may become intrenched in certain centres, and flourish for a long period, it does not multiply and accumulate indefinitely. There seems to be within itself a principle of restraint and of self-destructiveness. Many of the individuals of organized gangs of wicked men perish in quarrels among themselves, or in the prosecution of their evil purposes. In many other cases the virus of sin appears to become weakened, good influences are thrown around them and gradually become effective, and slowly but surely there comes an immense improvement in the moral condition of the inhabitants of the locality. Possibly there may be something of this kind in the unseen world. There may be agencies of repair concerning which we have no information. But this is merely a hope which love to man and certain indications in the moral and the natural worlds lead us to entertain, but for which we find no full scriptural warrant.

We have already expressed our opinion that all persons dying in infancy will be saved, and that the heathen will either be saved without a probation or have an ample opportunity to learn the way of salvation through Christ. *Not the same outlook for all.*

To those, also, who have lived under the bondage of superstition, and all who have been taught false doctrine regarding the way of salvation, we believe that the love of Christ will be manifested in all of its power, and that they will be enabled to make an intelligent choice of good or of evil as their guiding principle

for eternity. To the vast multitudes who live and die in the slums of the great cities of Christian lands, who never have had a clearer idea of the character of Christ than have the savages of Africa, we believe a full opportunity to learn of the real Saviour will be given. We cannot believe that they will enter the unseen world with the same prospects and be subject to the same conditions as will the many bold and intelligent blasphemers who know their duty but defiantly refuse to perform it. For the weak and the undecided, and those who desire to be good but do not quite grasp the requirements of the law of God, we hope that power and light will be given them in the article of death in such measure that they will make a decisive choice of the good. And we do not deem it impossible that

“There the sinful souls that turn
To the cross their dying eyes,
All the love of Christ shall learn
At His feet in Paradise.”

Some of the points above noted we hold as hopes rather than as convictions. But of one thing we are certain. This is that *Now the accepted time.* for those who here and now accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour there is a hope that can never be shaken, a hope which is like “an anchor of the soul” and which can never fail. Here is a hope which is buttressed by the assurances and the promises of God. And it is the only hope which has such support. It is laid upon an absolutely secure foundation,—the only one, we believe, upon which man can safely build.

Most, if not all, of us have lost relatives or friends in whom we feel the deepest interest and regarding whose present condition *Concerning those who have gone from us.* we have many anxious thoughts. They had never publicly confessed Christ, and, so far as we know, had not even privately consecrated themselves to Him. It seems to us that the chief thing to be done is to trust them with God, remembering that they are far dearer to Him than they possibly can be to ourselves. Then, looking at the matter a little more from the human side, we should remember that souls have many deep experiences of which no other person in this world ever knows. And if there had been no change before, it is possible that a decisive choice of Christ was made in the article of death. Their failure to comply with certain forms

and ceremonies which some have taught were decisive, and which we believe should be observed though we do not consider them essential to salvation, cannot be regarded as determining their present or their final state. As Professor C. A. Briggs, D. D., has said: "We can no longer think that any religious establishment in this world has now or ever has had the last word to say as to the salvation of any one." It is not for us, or for others, to affirm where each and every soul goes at death. But concerning the dear ones who have been taken from us we may be sure that, wherever they are, God is doing and will continue to do all that can be done for their welfare.

CHAPTER XXXI

RETRIBUTION

THE word "retribution" may mean a requital for either good or evil, but its most frequent use is to designate the infliction of penalty or of punishment. In the present chapter *A definition.* it will be used in the latter sense and will principally have reference to souls that depart this life without any adequate preparation for the great future which awaits them.

It is a sad fact that multitudes of people, even of those who have had the means of grace during all their lives, fail while here to make their peace with God. Then there are others *Inequality of opportunities to learn of Christ.* who live and die as pronounced enemies of all that is good. In addition to these there are countless numbers who have never come under religious influences and who pass into the unseen world in almost absolute ignorance of God and of their relations to Him. Now it is clear that such souls cannot enter the new life on the same plane as do those who had placed themselves in harmony with the will of God while they were in this world. It is equally clear that all do not deserve the same measure of punishment. In some cases punishment will be of great severity, in others it may be resolved into a deprivation of good, and there is reason to suppose that there will be all gradations between these extremes. But even if we yield to those who hold in its most elastic form the doctrine of the Larger Hope, we must admit that all souls that enter the unseen world in a state of enmity to God must be punished. The theory of "Death and Glory" which was once held to some extent has almost wholly given way to the more scriptural and more intelligent idea that the soul must at some time obtain a fitness for a glorious life before it can obtain the privileges and enjoy the blessings which result from such a life. Whether the soul that has had light in this world and has refused to do its duty will be led by punishment or discipline or persuasion or by any other means to repent, we do not affirm, though we

believe that such a soul takes an appalling risk in delaying repentance until after death. But we do affirm that if sin is not forgiven it must be punished.

A great many people have an idea that, so far as the future is concerned, the doctrine of retribution is peculiar to the Bible. So they assail the Scriptures and point out a few things which appear somewhat inconsistent but which are of little consequence, yet which they magnify into apparently great errors. By all possible means they endeavor to break down the authority of the Word of God. Some go so far as to renounce its claims altogether. But denying the truth of the Bible has not the slightest effect upon the principles which it sets forth. If every Bible were destroyed the truth that punishment follows sin would remain unshaken. It is as impossible to eliminate the fact of retribution from the moral world as it is to abolish death by an Act of Congress. If all the threats against sin which the Bible contains were blotted out there would still remain in the heart of man a fear that for the sins committed here punishment would be inflicted hereafter. He could not eradicate from his soul the deep and solemn conviction that somewhere, and at some time, it will be ill with the wicked. Neither could he escape the punishment which conscience tells him he deserves.

We cannot agree with those who hold that the punishment of sin after death is wholly, or principally, vindictive, using this term, of course, as carrying the idea of vengeance. We do not believe that God takes pleasure in the suffering of any of His creatures — even those who are the most wicked and rebellious. But He must uphold His law. He must show to the universe that He is just. And in order to do these things it is as necessary to punish the evil as it is to approve the good.

There are many who hold that the evils which souls suffer for their sins are largely preventive or remedial. It is plain that in this world a great deal of physical and mental suffering comes to us as the result of ignorance or carelessness. We do not regard this pain as penalty or punishment but as a warning, both to ourselves and to others, to avoid similar dangers or evils in future. It is consequential, and naturally and inevitably results from what we have done. If

*Retribution a law
of the moral
world.*

*Punishment not
principally vin-
dictive.*

*Perhaps largely
preventive or
remedial.*

there is, in the intermediate state, an opportunity for a change of character, there can hardly be a doubt that the suffering which is there endured will be of such a nature as to tend to prevent a continuance in sin and lead to a repentance that will, in part at least, remedy the terrible neglect of duty by the soul in this world.

As to the certainty of punishment of unrepented and unforgiven sin in the future life there can be no possible doubt. But regarding the duration of that punishment there has been a wide diversity of opinion. Our only infallible source of information is the Bible. Here we find numerous declarations and intimations, but these are so differently interpreted by different students that many theories have been developed therefrom.

The doctrine of eternal punishment is the most appalling one that has ever been presented to the human mind. Yet there is a great deal in the New Testament to sustain it. Christ told of the everlasting fire and of the worm that never dies. The Apostle John, in his great vision on the Isle of Patmos, saw the smoke of torment which ascendeth forever. We know that the claim is made that some of the words in the original language in which the New Testament was written have been so translated as to convey the idea of endlessness where only a long, indefinite period was meant. We know that some would greatly modify, in the interests of the Larger Hope, the description of the judgment as presented by Christ in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and hold that in all references to the fate of the wicked imagery and symbolism were largely used. But we also know that Christ would never have used such terms unless He designed to express something that was of tremendous significance, and that the symbol of the smoke of torment which was used by the Apostle John must mean something that is of the deepest import to the unrepentant soul.

Whatever may or may not be taught as to the duration of the punishment of the wicked, the Scriptures declare in the most emphatic terms that sin must be either forgiven or punished. Therefore, concerning those who have not been forgiven, we have full warrant for saying that, unless God intervenes in some way which He has not yet made known, punishment must go on until repentance occurs. If the

The duration of punishment.

Eternal punishment.

Will repentance insure forgiveness?

soul continues to exist, yet never repents, its punishment can never end. Some go so far as to assert that even repentance would be of no avail. The following lines represent a sentiment which, we believe, was once very general among religious people who represented numerous strong denominations:—

“ And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept,
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight,
And Sorrow, and Repentance, and Despair,
Among them walked, and to their thirsty lips
Presented frequent cups of burning gall.
.
And to their everlasting anguish still,
The thunders from above responding spoke
These words, which, through the caverns of perdition
Forlornly echoing, fell on every ear:
'Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.'
And back again recoiled a deeper groan.”¹

It is safe to say that sentiment has changed since large numbers of religious people adopted and applauded some of the harshest statements which are found in the poem from which the above extract is taken. Many, in all, continue to hold that the punishment of those who die impenitent will be endless, but they do so because they cannot find any escape from this doctrine when it is tested by the Word of God. But we doubt if there are any who have a living faith in Christ, who believe that the lost are ever mocked by the holding of “frequent cups of burning gall” to their thirsty lips, by sorrow, repentance, or despair.

Many of those who hold the principles of the Larger Hope believe that the duration of punishment will correspond exactly with the duration of sin. They claim that if man repents, in this world, or in any other world, and like the prodigal son returns to his Father, God will receive him with unspeakable joy. We hold the same view. Any man who repents and returns to God will be saved. But we dare not say that any man who has known of Christ here, and has rejected His claims, will be able to repent after death. For those who never knew Christ here, and who may have an opportunity to learn of Him between death and the judgment, we think the point of finality will come at the last day. And from what we see in this world, from what we know of the slavery

*Repentance may
become impossi-
ble.*

¹ Robert Pollock, *Description of Hell*.

into which sin brings the soul, from certain passages of Scripture, and especially the solemn words of Christ, "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin," we are led to believe that some souls will never yield in loving obedience to God.

If punishment must continue as long as the sinner persists in his rebellion against God, and if there are some souls which will

*The ultimate fate
of unrepentant
souls.*

never submit to His authority, it follows either that punishment must be without end or else the personality of these rebellious souls must be destroyed.

From a human standpoint the extinction of evil from the universe would seem to be necessary for the full triumph of the kingdom of God. It seems as though nothing short of this could satisfy His love or fulfill His purposes for the human race. And there are some who believe, and a still larger number who hope, that when all possibility of their recovery has passed, after the sovereignty of God has been clearly manifested and the justice of His government has been fully vindicated in the sight of the whole universe, some way will be found by which the sufferings of the lost can be brought to an end.

Various theories regarding the condition and fate of lost souls, and which have been designed to refute the arguments in favor of eternal punishment, have been advanced. Some have held that the souls which fail to enter heaven will be punished by being deprived of good rather than by the infliction of penalty. But this does not at all correspond with the pictures with which Christ tried to impress upon his hearers the character of the punishment which awaits those who refuse the offer of salvation.

The theories that those who have no living union with Christ will utterly perish at death, or will be annihilated at the judgment, or after undergoing punishment for a limited period, are often urged. We cannot accept them because, as shown in the chapter on Conditional Immortality, we cannot find satisfactory evidence of the truth of the doctrine upon which they are founded.

Some believe that in the course of ages the force of evil will exhaust itself in the soul, as some diseases appear to do in the physical body. But that does not correspond with what we see in this world, where the longer sin is continued the stronger its influence becomes. It seems far more probable, as some have

suggested, that the virulent nature of sin may tend to destroy the fibre and fabric of the soul. This process may go on until suffering shall cease in a loss of consciousness and a practical loss of personality.

There is also the theory that the soul may perish of inanition. It was made to live in communion with God. Its real life must come from Him, must be sustained by Him. But if the soul continues to wander away, and in process of time makes the separation complete and irrevocable, it may become impossible for its life, as a personal being, to be continued.

The suggestion has been made that while the life of the lost soul must be weak, yet there is a possibility that the soul itself may not be wholly useless. "Nature is of such abundance that all orders and conditions of things Perhaps not wholly useless. are and will be represented. The universe, a scene of infinite adaptations seen and unseen, contains, and will contain, vessels unto honor, and vessels for meaner service. . . . All the weak, evermore and everywhere, do some work for God ever and ever."¹

An eminent theologian of Switzerland has suggested the possibility of a change similar to that which the workman effects when he finds that a glass which has cooled is not of the shape which he designed it to have. He cannot change it as it is, but he can put it into the furnace and recast it. "Can one not imagine something similar with regard to the man who has refused to fulfill his destiny? May there not be at the bottom of this ruined personality an impersonal human existence which God can take back into His hands to draw from it by a subsequent development a personality which shall answer to His thought?"²

Such are some of the principal theories regarding the final disposition of unrepentant souls. Some of them seem to ameliorate the horrors of endless punishment, but hardly one of them is wanting in the certainty of deprivation of good, and nearly all involve suffering, and sorrow, and remorse. And we cannot be sure that any of these less fearful forms of doom will be the lot of any unrepentant soul. When man strives with his Maker in this world there is

¹ Rev. J. W. Reynolds, *The World to Come*.

² Rev. Frederic Godet, D. D., in *That Unknown Country*.

hope that before he is called away he will see the error of his course and make full submission to the Being who rightfully demands his love and service. If this submission is made we have no doubt as to the future welfare of the soul. But if the enmity is carried into the next world, we know that there must be discipline or punishment which will involve suffering. How severe this suffering will be, or how long it will be continued, we cannot be sure. Such matters must be left to Him whose law has so often been broken, and whose offers of forgiveness have so constantly been disregarded. He is a just God; but if it can be done without impairing the integrity of His government, we may expect that His justice will be largely tempered with mercy and compassion.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE HEAVENLY HOME

AFTER the solemn events of the resurrection and the judgment are closed, the blessed will enter their new home. Where and what this will be, and the conditions and character of the life which will there be passed, are interesting themes. *The final abode of the righteous.* We shall not enter into an extended discussion, as a large number of the questions growing out of them have been considered in previous chapters. It seemed best to devote our study of the future life principally to the period between death and the resurrection. This, partly because much that can be predicated of this period can be safely assumed in respect to the endless age which will begin when time shall end; partly because this intermediate stage lies so much nearer to us; and largely because we all have friends who have passed into the new life, and about whose present condition we are most anxious to learn, but who will not reach the end of the present dispensation sooner than ourselves.

As we have shown in a preceding chapter, departed souls must have some definite place in which to live. The idea that there must be a certain "state" of the soul in order that it may abide in happiness is correct as far as it goes, but is altogether inadequate. *Heaven a place.* Heaven is a place as well as a state.

When we come to consider the exact location of heaven we find ourselves in the realm of pure conjecture. Numerous answers to the question have been given by writers upon this point, but they have varied widely, and none of them seem to be decisive. *Where is heaven?* The theory of an invisible universe which lies all around us, and perhaps interpenetrates the one that we see, has been mentioned in preceding chapters. Some believe that when all that is now visible to us passes away, this now unseen universe will form the new heavens and the new earth which are to abide forever. A far more general

belief, and one which is of considerable antiquity, is that the stars are to be the final homes of the human race. A comparatively recent development is to the effect that Alcyone, the principal star in the group known as the Pleiades, is the central sun around which all the stars composing our astral system revolve, that this star is practically "the capital of the universe," and that here the kingdom of heaven will be established. This is an interesting theory; but as able astronomers of the present day declare that the idea of this "central sun" is wrong, it may prove of no practical value.

Perhaps the most common belief of all, and one which has many Scripture intimations in its favor, is that the present world, *May be in this world.* in the form in which it will appear after the great transformation which it will undergo at or about the time of the judgment, will be the place that will be known as heaven. It is true that there are other passages which intimate that the final home of the blest will be far above the earth, but these are indirect and cannot be regarded as decisive. And it appears reasonable to suppose that the new heavens and new earth mentioned by the Apostle Peter in his Second Epistle, and by the Apostle John in the Revelation, will be formed from the universe with which we are now familiar. It seems fitting, too, that here, where man has sinned and has repented, and where Christ has lived and died in order to lead him back into right relations with God, should be his heavenly home. Some have objected to this theory on the ground that the earth will be too small to contain the innumerable host of the saved. But to this it may be replied that no one knows what will be the dimensions of the earth after it has passed through the changes which it is to undergo. Besides, this might be the centre of the home, the place where God will have His tabernacle with men, and will most fully reveal Himself to them, and where Christ will be seen in all His glory; and yet this abode might extend, as some have supposed it would do, to other worlds and to almost illimitable distances in every direction. On the supposition, which we believe to be true, that in their new bodies the inhabitants of heaven will be able to move from place to place, and over almost infinite distances, without fatigue, this appears to be the most reasonable and satisfactory theory which we have seen described.

While heaven is necessarily a place, it is, also, a great deal more than a place. No locality can be a place of pure and exalted happiness to a soul that revels in wickedness. *Heaven a state as well as a place.* The foundations of the heavenly home are laid in character. Christ did not teach His disciples that heaven was far away. He did not allow them to think of it as something external to themselves, or to suppose that they could go to it as they could go to the towns and cities of Judea. And when the Pharisees asked Him as to the time at which the kingdom of God should come He assured them that it was not to appear from without but must be developed from within. Before a man could go to heaven he must have heaven within his own heart. And this principle can never be modified. The man who has no fitness for heaven cannot enter there.

The conditions of life in heaven are such as to promote the perfect happiness of each and every inhabitant. This indicates an immense diversity and an endless variety. For *The happy conditions of life in heaven.* as tastes differ here, so will they differ there. And there, as it is not always the case here, every pure taste will be gratified. The powers of body and mind will be vastly increased, and the present senses will either be wonderfully developed or new and far more efficient ones will be given in their stead.

From the life in heaven all that would tend to injure the body or annoy the soul will be forever done away. There will be no sickness, or accident, or pain, or anxiety; no separation from those whom we love. There will be no waning of the powers of body or of mind as the stream of eternity flows forever on. There will be no enervating heat, no piercing cold. And there will be no sin and no temptation to sin. In every way the inhabitants of heaven will be protected and blest.

“Hunger, thirst, disease, unknown,
On immortal fruits they feed ;
Them the Lamb amidst the throne
Shall to living fountains lead ;
Joy and gladness banish sighs ;
Perfect love dispels all fear,
And for ever from their eyes
God shall wipe away the tear.”

That heaven will be a social place there cannot be the slightest doubt. We have reason to expect an organized society, a home

life, and the perpetuation of the pure friendships of this world.

A social place. These matters we have discussed in a preceding chapter and, therefore, do not need to dwell upon them here. As we meet our friends in the unseen world there will be mutual recognition. These acquaintanceships will be continued, and in the course of the endless period awaiting those who enter heaven innumerable new ones will be formed. Doubtless each one will have his particular home, but he will be freely welcomed into the homes of others. And there will be feasts and other gatherings at which great numbers will be present. The companionship of all the good of this world and of good angels is assured, and it is very probable that there will be the most pleasant association with numerous other and still higher orders of beings. Thus, in the very presence, and with the fullest blessing of God and of the great Redeemer, the saved will forever rejoice in a social life into which no element of discord can enter.

In the chapter on the Recognition of Friends we noted the fact that in the better life some will miss relatives and friends whom they dearly loved, but who failed to secure a vital union with God. Whether some who had thus far failed will be led to Christ during the intermediate period we dare not affirm. But though it is an appalling thought, it is doubtless true that some will be lost. The question how the knowledge of this fact can be reconciled with the perfect joy of the saved has received various explanations, several of which were stated in the chapter noted. We regard it as one of the great mysteries which only God can reveal. But we know that if any are lost it will be of their own free will. Whatever almighty power can do to save them will be done. And to those who love them the fullest consolations will be given. For of the inhabitants of heaven we read, in His own Book, that "God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The life of heaven will not only be social and happy, but it will also be active and energetic. There are numerous statements or intimations in the Scriptures which support
A life of activity. this assertion, and the constitution of the human mind is such as to make activity imperative. It is true that the Bible tells of a rest which remains for the people of God, and in various places the weary disciple is encouraged by the promise



CHIMES OF VICTORY.

that the toil will end ere long and that then sweet rest will come. But these passages do not mean that after it enters the heavenly home the soul is to spend long periods in idleness. With nothing whatever to do its condition would become as irksome as its most difficult labor on earth was exhausting. The proper interpretation of such promises is that there will no longer be toil that will fatigue the body or distract the mind.

Into how many lines the work of heaven will be directed we cannot imagine. We can affirm that there will be all the joyous activities of worship. It is not probable that, except at special seasons, all members of the vast multitude of the inhabitants of heaven will be engaged in this service at the same moment. And there may be times when the great congregation will be hushed in silent prayer and thanksgiving, though it is to be expected that some of the various forms of worship will be almost constantly observed. It is true that in his glorious vision of the City of God the Apostle John "saw no temple therein," but this was not because worship had ceased, but because the immediate presence and the clear revelation of the glory of "the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb," made it needless to set apart any special place but converted the whole city into one vast and sacred temple.

Some of the forms of activity which we suggested as possible for the soul in the period between death and the judgment cannot belong to the life of heaven, because the purposes which they were designed to serve no longer exist. But it is probable that those who are far advanced in the knowledge of God will instruct the ones who have made less progress. It is conjectured, too, that souls may be sent from world to world as messengers of God upon errands regarding which we can form no opinion. And there are great numbers, some of them people of good education and excellent judgment, who believe that many of the employments of this world will be continued in heaven. This idea, in a more or less clearly developed form, can be traced from the time of the ancient Egyptians to the present day. It is not impossible, and it does not seem unreasonable, that there is a good deal of truth in this view. We regard it certain that there will be work for all, but there will be no drudgery, and no weariness will follow the happy, earnest effort to do the will of God.

"Service there is rest,
Rest, service: for the Paradise of saints,
Like Eden with its toilless husbandry,
Has many plants to tend, and flowers to thrive,
And fruit-trees in the garden of the soul,
That ask the culture of celestial skill."¹

With all the activities and enjoyments of the heavenly life there will doubtless be a constant and unending progress and development in the powers of the soul. As in this world the use of the mental powers promotes intellectual growth and vigor, and continues to do so until the body becomes unable to act efficiently as its servant, it is to be expected that in the heavenly home, where the resurrection body with its vast and tireless powers will do every bidding of the soul, this process of development will go on forever. We shall always remain finite beings, and for the finite soul progress is always possible. Only to the Infinite can perfection be ascribed. Therefore we can look forward to a constant growth in wisdom and a continuous unfoldment and development of the spiritual nature.

It can also be asserted that the heavenly home is safe and abiding. Death has been done away, sickness cannot invade, no accident or danger from without or from within can threaten. The inhabitant of heaven has come to his Father's house, "into which no enemy enters, and from which no friend departs." And here he is to abide forever and forevermore. For when the judgment is passed the line of time, which has held to a direct course since its beginning, will enter the circle of eternity, a circle which once entered can have no end.

One of the sources of joy to the inhabitants of heaven will be the presence of a vast assemblage of souls which have been redeemed and saved. The Apostle John described it as "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues." There will be special loves and friendships as on earth, but there will be no jealousy, no envy, no bitterness. Every act will be directed by love. All will be the happy children of the one Father whom they adore. In what manner they will communicate with each other, whether by means of language or by

¹ Rev. Edward Henry Bickersteth, D. D., *Employment in Heaven*.

mental impressions which may be received and understood at any distance, cannot be determined, but it appears probable that both methods will be employed. Some have assumed that Hebrew was the language used in paradise and that it will be the language of heaven,—a harmless but an entirely fanciful theory. But whatever the method may be, it is certain that all who dwell in heaven will be able to communicate with each other, and with God, with the utmost facility.

It has been said that heaven is a place. Perhaps some of our readers expect us to give an elaborate description of this locality in which God especially dwells and the saved have their eternal home. It would be useless to attempt such a description. Where is the man who can adequately describe the dazzling splendor of the noonday sun, the view from some lofty mountain peak, the serenity of some secluded valley, the colors of a gorgeous sunset, or the glories of a starlit winter night? Every effort would be a failure. And if man cannot satisfactorily describe the things which he has seen on earth, it will be worse than labor lost for him to attempt to describe the glories of the world which is not only unseen but is infinitely superior to this.

Those who want material pictures of the heavenly home should look upon the earth in the seasons in which its glories are most fully manifested, when vegetation is most exuberant and animal life is most active and vigorous. Let them think of the mountains and the seas, of the forests and the plains, and of beautiful landscapes which show such wonderful changes under the variations of light and shade; and as they are impressed thereby let them remember that all of this beauty and glory is shown in a world that is under the curse of sin. Then let them try to think what glories the earth would present if that curse were removed.

All these natural glories we may expect in the new home. Everything that is noxious in any form will be excluded. But there will be mountains and plains, and rivers and seas, and animals, and trees and plants; and the vast variety of animate and inanimate objects which so richly adorn this world will be there in unfading beauty and imperishable form.

Turning in another direction, let those who desire visible representations direct their thoughts to the most beautiful and

most magnificent cities of this world, and then think how they compare with the city that "lieth foursquare," "having twelve gates," the wall of which was jasper, "and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass" — the city that "hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb." Let them think of the busy life of the cities of earth and compare it with the activity of the city in which "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of holy beings proclaim the merit of Him who came to earth to ransom sinful souls. Let them read all that the Apostle John has written in regard to the heavenly home, but remember as they read, that, although he was inspired, he was subject to the limitations of human language, and was able to give only a faint outline of a description which he had neither the power nor the means fully to express.

After all that can be said of the outward glories of the heavenly home, it must be remembered that the chief sources of enjoyment are not to be found in the magnificence of external surroundings, however glorious they may be, but that they lie within the soul itself. The complete revelation of the love of God, the intimate communion with Jesus Christ, the absolute eradication of all desire to sin, the companionship of those who were dear to us on earth and of numberless other holy children of God, the rest and peace, and feeling of security which springs from the assurance that no evil or anxiety of any kind can disturb the soul henceforth forever, and the entire gratification of every longing and desire, — these sweet, and silent, and holy influences will be the most satisfying of all the joys of the heavenly life. But these joys will be supplemented and heightened by the exquisite beauties, the radiant glories, and the brilliant splendors of the city which is to be the dwelling-place of our God, and the eternal home of all who have given their hearts to Him.

*The eternal peace
of the soul.*

"In it all is light and glory;
O'er it shines a nightless day:
Every trace of sin's sad story,
All the curse, hath passed away."

CONCLUSION

THE GREAT CONSUMMATION

WHEN the great events of the resurrection and the judgment, with others closely related to them, have closed, the designs and purposes of God respecting His kingdom in this world and within the limits of time will have been consummated. *The end of the Gospel age.* The time of which the Prophet Isaiah had told far back in the distant past when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," has come. This, with numerous other prophecies, has been fulfilled. The past has been rounded out to completion. The Gospel age has come to an end. Many of the results of this great consummation have been described, but a few points require somewhat fuller treatment in this closing chapter.

After the establishment of the Christian church each individual who became connected with it was a single, and, because there cannot be perfect communion in this world, to some degree necessarily, an isolated member of a *The church of Christ.* certain fold. The church with which he was united was only one of the thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of churches then existing on the earth which, though united by the bonds of Christian fellowship, were yet separated by the limitations of space and time. They were also, in part, separated from those who had served God worthily under the Old Dispensation, and the later believers in Christ who had been taken into the spiritual world. With the great consummation all this has been done away. The churches whose numbers and whose membership had, during the progress of time, increased beyond all the powers of the finite mind to compute or to comprehend, are now gathered, in perfect love and communion, in the immediate presence of their Saviour and their Lord. Commencing with

the individual Christian here upon earth there has been union, and development, and organization, and transference, until each and every member of the "great multitude, which no man could number," has a place of happiness and usefulness in the mighty host that forms the unbroken ranks of the redeemed.

Both Scripture and human reason teach that the natural world was designed to be in harmony with man. But while it still has

The transformation of nature. much of beauty, and does much to supply his wants, it is not, and for ages it has not been, his ally. In

order to obtain the plants which he desires he must give them constant care and wearisome toil. If left to itself for only a short time the finest field soon grows up to trees or to worthless plants. In order to maintain his supremacy over the fields which he has subdued man must be alert and energetic. If he relaxes his vigilance the thorns and the thistles which have come as one of the results of his failure to keep in right relations to God, and to the world which was formed as the theatre of his probation, or education, will soon secure and will permanently maintain possession.

The elements, too, often prove destructive to man and destroy his choicest possessions. The lightning, the cyclone, the earthquake, the volcano, the tidal wave, and the tempest, each and all are terrible instruments of destruction before which man is utterly powerless. Then, also, in the animal world we see unquestionable evidence of hostility to man. Yet it was the design of God that nature should be kindly and that the animals should be subject to man. Many species have been domesticated and made useful, but even of these there are not a few which need constant oversight and restraint. If allowed to escape from his control it is found that in one or two generations they revert to the wild type and will serve him no longer. A large number of other species still maintain, and will long continue, their antagonism to man.

In the final processes which lead to the great consummation all this will be changed. As man has been regenerated and

A great change. raised from the low plane of a life of sin to a condition of holiness, so the natural world which has participated with him in his suffering and degradation must also be regenerated. The Apostle Peter, on the authority of Christ Himself, assures his readers that the present heavens and earth shall

be destroyed, and that in their stead we are to "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," and in the Revelation of Saint John we are told of "a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away." Science agrees with revelation in the prediction that, in its present form, the earth will be destroyed.

Many have supposed that this destruction would be annihilation, and that the new heavens and the new earth would be new creations, but as science teaches that matter cannot be annihilated, and as in the case of man there is regeneration, instead of the destruction of one being and the creation of another, it may be regarded as certain that nature will be thoroughly purified and renovated rather than made entirely new. There can be no question, however, that the work of reconstruction will be on a most stupendous scale. This we are led to expect not only from the imagery of the Scriptures but also from what we know has occurred when the individual life of other worlds has come to an end. It will undoubtedly be a scene of great spectacular magnificence.

As to the exact extent of this transformation no finite intelligence can determine. We see no reason to hold, with some, that the whole universe will pass through this tremendous change. But we believe that all that has been The extent of this transformation. closely connected with man will be regenerated. Concerning this it is reasonable to expect that this world at least will receive "a reconsecration . . . as of a temple that sin had profaned."¹ For this redemption from the curse of sin nature herself is sometimes represented as looking with an earnest and steadfast desire. Thus in the eighth chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans we read: "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." And there are other passages in the Scriptures which indicate that with the full redemption of man the curse will be lifted from the natural world. We believe that all nature will be glorified, that the spe-

¹ Rev. James Denney, D. D., *Studies in Theology*.

cies of animals and plants and trees which have pleased men here will appear in far greater beauty in the new earth. Possibly, too, the animals which now are dangerous or noxious to man may be so changed as to be objects of beauty and pleasure and have a place with those which are now docile and useful. Inanimate nature, too, may be so transformed as to make every spot in the new earth a place of beauty and a scene of enchantment.

We have shown how death, though in some ways beneficent, is the great enemy of man. He is an enemy which every human

The overthrow of death.

being must meet and before whose power every created form of life must fall. But with the great consummation this power of death will be forever overthrown. In his vision on Patmos the Apostle John saw that "death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." And when he had seen the new heaven and the new earth he gave this joyous and inspiring assurance: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God; and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more."

The long contest between good and evil, in which the advantage has often appeared to be with the wrong, has come to a

The complete suppression of evil.

decisive and an eternal close. In preceding chapters we have fully considered the probable condition of those who up to this time have remained disobedient. If personal existence continues it is in such form and under such conditions as to prevent all renewal of strife. No rebel flag will ever be raised again. We hope some way for the final extinction of evil from the universe will be found. But if that fails, we are sure of its absolute and eternal subjection. The authority of God will never again be defied. He has vindicated His ways and works in the sight of all created intelligences. And whatever the result of probation or education may be as it concerns any particular individual, every soul, from that of Adam down to the latest born on earth, will freely and fully acknowledge that He has been not only a just but also a loving God.

In the closing scenes of the present dispensation the problem of sin will be solved. Everything and every creature in the new heavens and the new earth will be in perfect harmony with

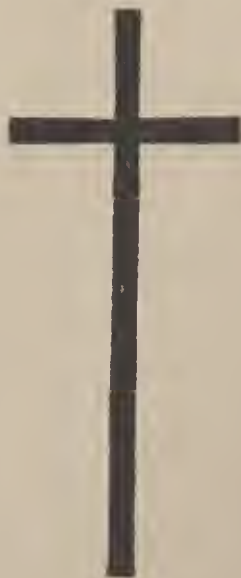
the will of God. All nature will exhibit a glory and a splendor of which mortals never dreamed, and will be consecrated to the eternal service of the Creator and the use and pleasure of all who love Him. Then will be fully and forever answered the ceaseless prayer of the ages — THY KINGDOM COME.

*The prayer of the
ages answered.*

With the progress of the great events which will mark the final perfecting of the kingdom of God, our Great Redeemer, the Son of Man and the Son of God, who, though He died upon a cross, has raised man from a state of sin and degradation to a condition of purity and exaltation, will assume His rightful throne, upon which as "King of kings and Lord of lords" He will reign forevermore. His followers who formed the church militant on earth have been gathered into the glorious church triumphant in heaven, and look forward with unshaken confidence to a future of undisturbed peace and of unending joy. But we believe that the symbol of loyalty and fidelity, which they so frequently carried, and around which they so often rallied in this world, will never be discarded. Through all the age that shall have no end the cross of Christ, so often despised, reviled, and scorned by the enemies of His cause, will stand on some majestic height in the City of God, as the emblem of the glorious triumph of Him who has conquered death.

*The Cross of
Christ victorious.*

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."



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